



St. Paul – Elk Point Regional Partnership Regional Recreation Master Plan

August 2019

Acknowledgment

RC Strategies+PERC acknowledges that this *St. Paul-Elk Point Regional Partnership Regional Recreation Master Plan* has been created for an area located within Treaty 6 territory—the ancestral and traditional territory of the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux and Métis Nations. This document has been compiled with great respect towards all Indigenous people and in consideration of the ninety-four calls to action as outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.



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Executive Summary

The Town of St. Paul, Town of Elk Point, Summer Village of Horseshoe Bay and the County of St. Paul have partnered to plan the future of recreation services in the region. This Regional Recreation Master Plan is meant to be a guiding strategic document, or “roadmap”, that can help inform decision making and future collaborations between the partner municipalities in the provision of recreation (and related) opportunities.

The Master Plan is also meant to assist the partner municipalities with meeting the Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) requirements of the new Modernized Municipal Government Act (2016).

The Plan is based on thorough research and public engagement; it was also guided by a regional project steering committee, consisting of administration and elected officials from each of the partner municipalities.

Research Inputs

- Public and stakeholder engagement
- Trends and leading practices
- Population and demographics
- Benchmarking
- Facility inventory and assessment
- Review of current recreation opportunities and utilization

Analysis & Strategic Direction Setting

- Identification of the strengths and gaps of recreation in the region
- Identification of potential focus areas and priorities for the Master Plan to address

St. Paul-Elk Point Region Recreation Master Plan

- Draft Master Plan
- Public and stakeholder review
- Final Master Plan

The Plan outlines and justifies the following recommendations, or strategies, for improving the current state of recreation in the region.

Recommendations
Strategy #1: Enhance the capacity building support provided to volunteers and community organizations.
Strategy #2: Enhance the promotions and marketing of recreation (and related) opportunities in the region.
Strategy #3: Ensure clarity and / or consistency regarding the grant funding processes and decision making.
Strategy #4: Provide additional training and development opportunities.
Strategy #5: Undertake a Needs Assessment every 5 years to track progress and update the Master Plan.
Strategy #6: Develop a regional financial assistance program to ensure inclusion and access to recreation programs and opportunities.
Strategy #7: Improve the collection and analysis of utilization data.

The Plan also outlines recommendations related to how the region could collaborate more in the future in the provision of recreation opportunities to residents and visitors. Although a regional approach to recreation provision is outlined, and the following next steps are identified, ultimately the level to which the partners will work together will need to be agreed upon to certain stages of implementation and will also need to be revisited from time to time. In order to work together as a region in enhancing the current state of recreation, the following next steps are recommended.

Next steps related to enhanced regional collaboration in the Region...
1. Council endorsement / acceptance the Master Plan (all four Councils).
2. Creation of a Regional body with administrative support (terms of reference for each level) including four partner municipalities and other recreation service delivery agents such as agricultural societies if deemed relevant.
3. Regional body defines regional assets (starting with ideas outlined in the Master Plan). Considering the criteria outlined herein such as quantity in the region, capital and operating cost structure, utilization patterns, etc.
4. Regional body determines responsibility sharing approach and sharing model (flow of resources and decision making will be between all municipalities). Considering the criteria outlined herein such as balancing population served and assessment values, benefitting market area as opposed to utilization patterns, acknowledging local "host" communities receive more benefit, etc.
5. Regional body and independent municipalities tackle other plan strategies (as prioritized by each periodically) such as regional promotions and marketing efforts, consistent policy development, standardized granting procedures, etc.
6. Regional body reports on Plan progress annually to each Council.
7. Independent municipalities use Regional body as a sounding board / filter for all decision making related to agreed to regional assets and services (so that all regional projects are contemplated in the same way, through a regional perspective).

The region now has a road map for improving recreation, regardless of how municipalities decide to collaborate. The recommendations herein are meant to strengthen and bolster the benefits in the region from investment in recreation. Residents and visitors of the area will be better off as Plan implementation occurs.

1 ● Introduction

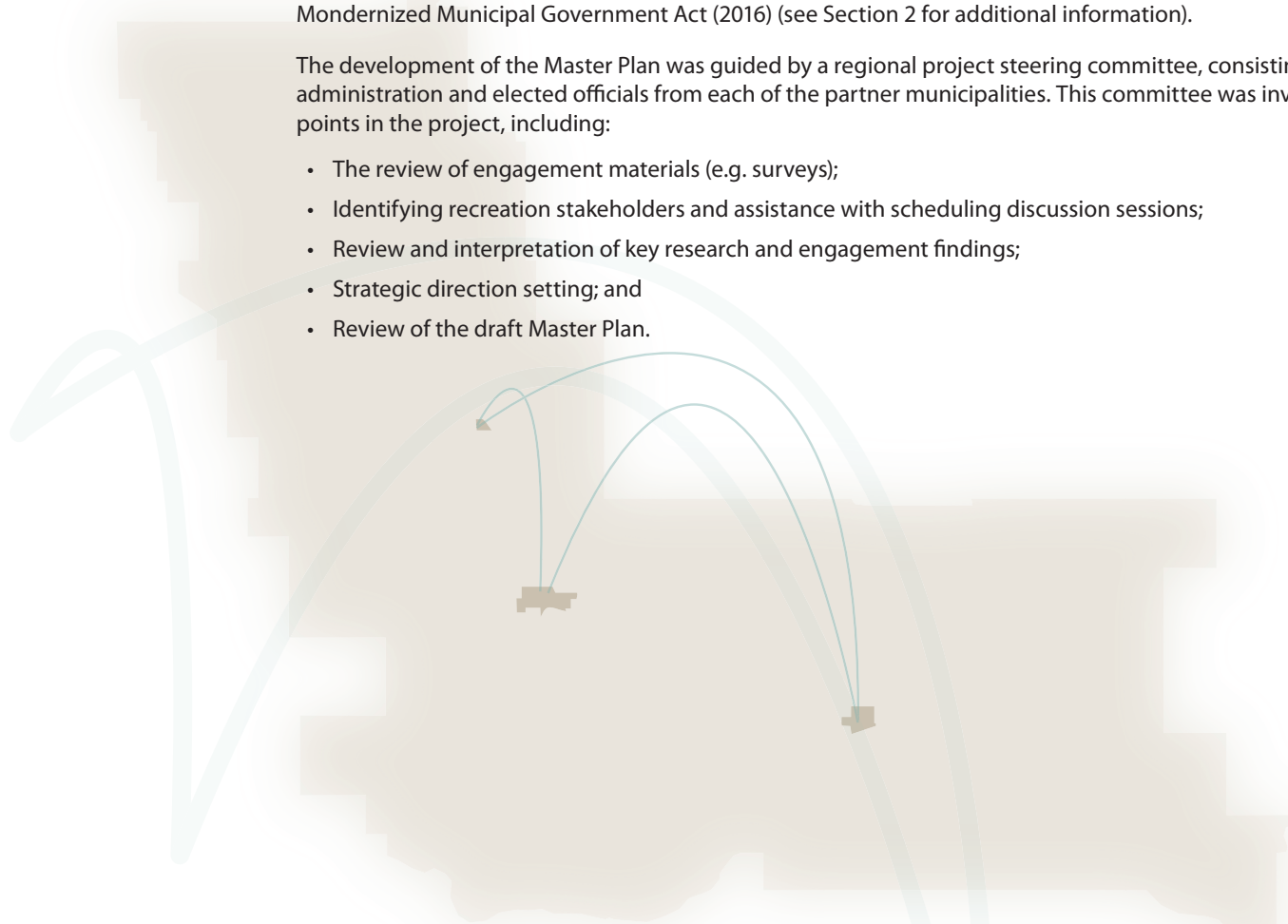
In this section:

- Overview of the project context and objectives.
- Overview of the process used to develop the Master Plan.

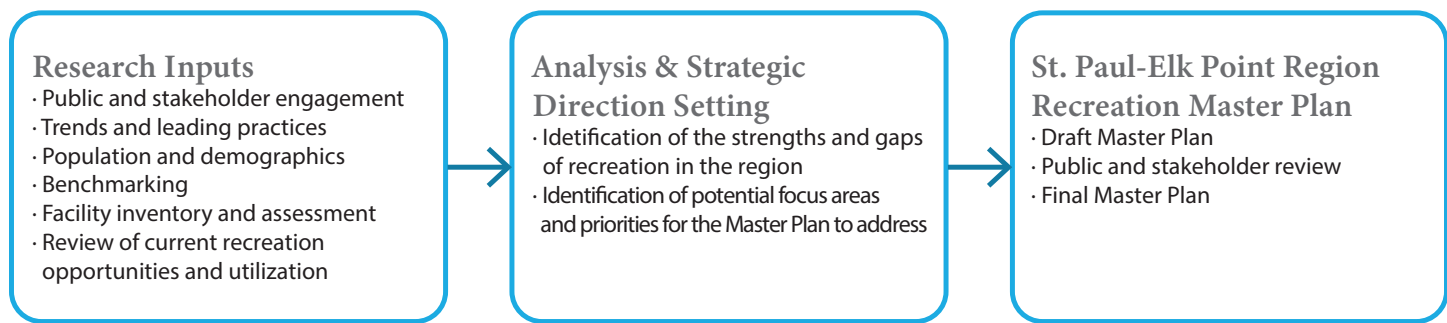
Project Context & Objectives

The Town of St. Paul, Town of Elk Point, Summer Village of Horseshoe Bay and the County of St. Paul are working together to plan the future of recreation services in the region. The development of a Regional Recreation Master Plan (hereafter referred to as the/this Master Plan) provides the opportunity to create a guiding strategic document, or “roadmap”, that can help inform decision making and future collaborations between the partner municipalities in the provision of recreation (and related) opportunities. The Master Plan also assists the partner municipalities with meeting the Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) requirements of the new Modernized Municipal Government Act (2016) (see Section 2 for additional information).

The development of the Master Plan was guided by a regional project steering committee, consisting of administration and elected officials from each of the partner municipalities. This committee was involved at key points in the project, including:

- The review of engagement materials (e.g. surveys);
 - Identifying recreation stakeholders and assistance with scheduling discussion sessions;
 - Review and interpretation of key research and engagement findings;
 - Strategic direction setting; and
 - Review of the draft Master Plan.
- 

The following graphic depicts how the project team developed the Master Plan. As illustrated in the graphic, a number of research methods were used to understand the current state of recreation in the region (strengths and gaps). This information was then analyzed and used to develop the Master Plan.



**The detailed research and engagement findings are published under a separate cover in the State of Recreation in the St. Paul-Elk Point Region Research Summary Report. A summary of key findings from the project research and engagement are also provided in Section 5 of the Master Plan.*



Overview of the Master Plan Content



Section 1: Introduction

To explain the Master Plan purpose, process and intended use.



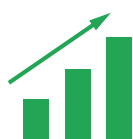
Section 2: Strategic Alignment of the Master Plan

This section outlines how the Master Plan aligns with local, regional, provincial and national planning. This section also discusses how the Master Plan may influence future local and regional planning.



Section 3: Regional Content

To provide an overview of the region, including the communities within the region. This section identified key characteristics which are likely to impact recreation needs and demands.



Section 4: The Benefits of Providing Recreation Opportunities

This section provides research to support an ongoing public investment in recreation.



Section 5: Research and Engagement Summary

This section provides key findings from the research and engagement that was conducted for the Master Plan project.

**The detailed findings are published under a separate cover in the State of Recreation in the St. Paul-Elk Point Region Research Summary Report.*



Section 6: Guiding Principles for Recreation in the Region

This section provides a philosophical Framework to guide the municipal partners future collaborative efforts in providing recreation on a regional basis. Included in the section is a:

- Vision for Recreation in the St. Paul – Elk Point Region;
- Goals; and a
- Targeted Level of Regional Collaboration.



Section 7: Service Delivery Strategies

Building on the Framework provided in Section 6, specific strategies are provided to enhance recreation opportunities in the region.



Section 8: Regional Recreation Infrastructure Strategies

This section provides strategies and priorities for future investment in recreation facilities and spaces.



Section 9: Implementation

This section provides an overview of the steps and resources that will be required to implement the recommendations and strategies outlined in Sections 6-8.

2. Strategic Alignment of the Master Plan

In this section:

- Strategic alignment of the Master Plan with local, provincial and national planning.
- Overview of guiding provincial and national documents that provide a basis for recreation and related service delivery.

Understanding the broader regional strategic planning context was important in the development of the Master Plan. The project team reviewed a number of influencing local, regional, provincial and national documents with the intent of ensuring that the Master Plan aligns strategically with key aspects of this broader planning. As depicted by the following graphic, the Master Plan:

- Falls under a number of overarching municipal plans;
- Is informed by key provincial and national frameworks and plan;
- Is informed by existing municipal policies and procedures; and
- Will help inform the development of future policies and procedures.



Summarized as follows in this section are a number of key provincial and national planning considerations.

The Modernized Municipal Government Act

The Modernized Municipal Government Act (2016) additionally requires all municipalities in the province that share common boundaries to develop Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICF) for a number of specified service areas including recreation. The Master Plan assists the partner municipalities with achieving the ICF requirements.

Overview of the Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICF) Requirements

For each service, the ICF must...

- List the services currently provided by each municipality
- List the services being shared on an intermunicipal basis by the municipalities
- List the services provided by third parties
- Identify how each of these services would be best delivered
- Outline how intermunicipal services will be delivered and funded

The ICF must also include:

- A time frame for implementing intermunicipal services
- An Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) unless municipalities have separately adopted one
- Provisions for a binding dispute resolution process to resolve implementation disputes

The ICF may contain:

- Details required to implement intermunicipal services
- Provisions for developing infrastructure for common benefit

Source: <https://www.alberta.ca/intermunicipal-collaboration-framework.aspx>



Key Provincial and National Recreation Strategies, Plans and Frameworks

Truth and Reconciliation: Calls to Action

Overview: The **Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada** was published in 2015. The Commission was formed and tasked with achieving the following goals:

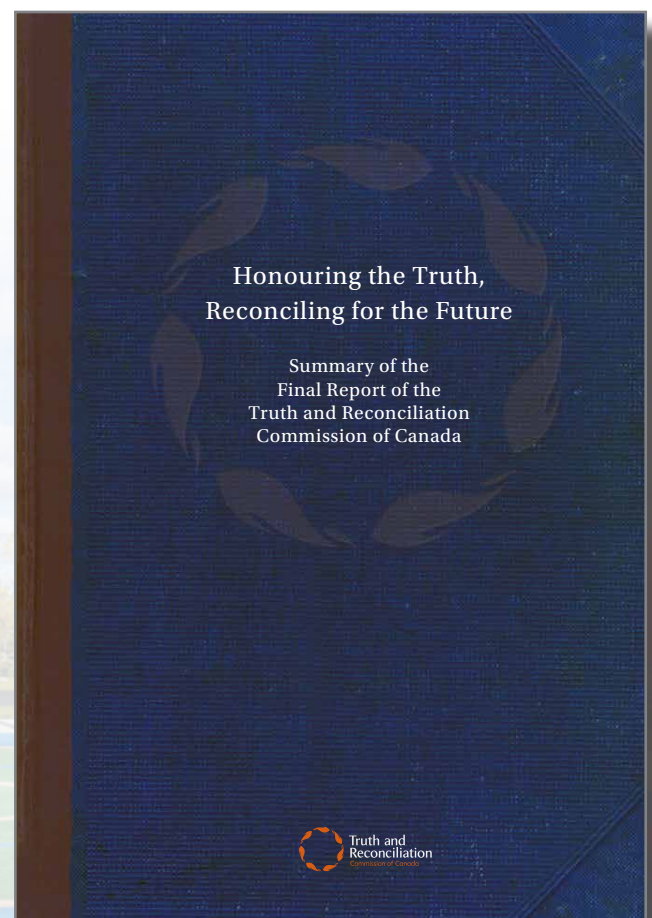
1. Acknowledge Residential School experiences, impacts and consequences;
2. Provide a holistic, culturally appropriate and safe setting for former students, their families and communities as they come forward to the Commission;
3. Witness, support, promote and facilitate truth and reconciliation events at both the national and community levels;
4. Promote awareness and public education of Canadians about the IRS system and its impacts;
5. Identify sources and create as complete an historical record as possible of the IRS system and legacy. The record shall be preserved and made accessible to the public for future study and use;
6. Produce and submit to the Parties of the Agreement a report including recommendations to the Government of Canada concerning the IRS system and experience including: the history, purpose, operation and supervision of the IRS system, the effect and consequences of IRS (including systemic harms, intergenerational consequences and the impact on human dignity) and the ongoing legacy of the residential schools; and
7. Support commemoration of former Indian Residential School students and their families accordance with the Commemoration Policy Directive.

The Report culminated in the identification of ninety-four (94) Calls to Action across a broad array of topic areas. Identified below are those Calls to Action with direct pertinence to the delivery of recreation and related services.

- We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services. (Call to Action #19)
- We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring

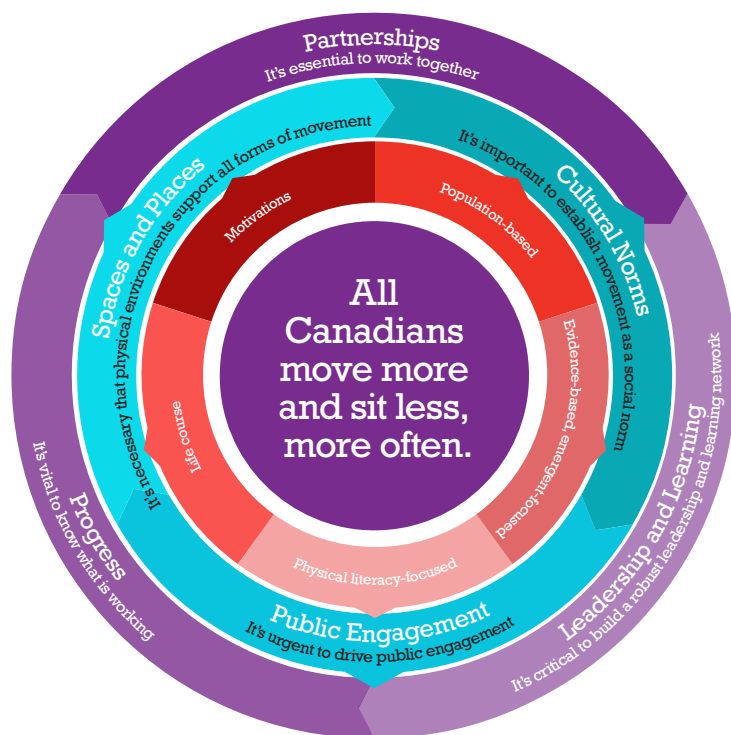
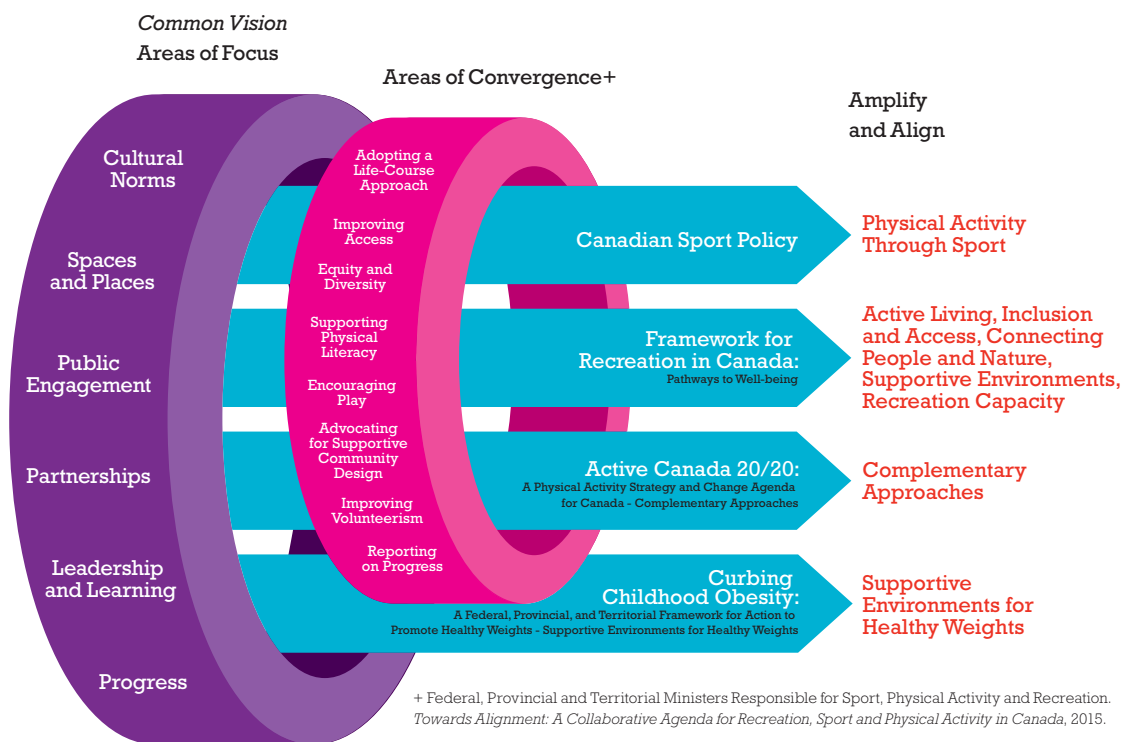
that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples. (Call to Action #89)

- We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to, establishing:
 - » In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples;
 - » An elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes;
 - » Programs for coaches, trainers, and sports officials that are culturally relevant for Aboriginal peoples; and
 - » Anti-racism awareness and training programs. (Call to Action #90)
- We call upon the officials and host countries of international sporting events such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events. (Call to Action #91)



A Common Vision for increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living in Canada: Let's Get Moving

Overview: The Common Vision is a new national policy document that serves to complement and align with other relevant policies, strategies and frameworks with the goal of physical activity and reducing sedentary living. The Common Vision identifies three key areas of focus: Cultural Norms, Places and Spaces and Engagement.



A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

Overview: Endorsed by the Government of Canada, Provincial and Territorial Ministers, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, Provincial and Territorial Parks and Recreation Associations and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The Framework provides a new vision for recreation and identifies common ways of thinking about the role of recreation in Canadian life, based on clear goals and underlying values and principles.

A Renewed Definition of Recreation

“ Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing. ”

-A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

Part II

A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015

Vision

Everyone engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences, that foster:

Individual Wellbeing	Wellbeing of Natural & Built Environments	Community Wellbeing
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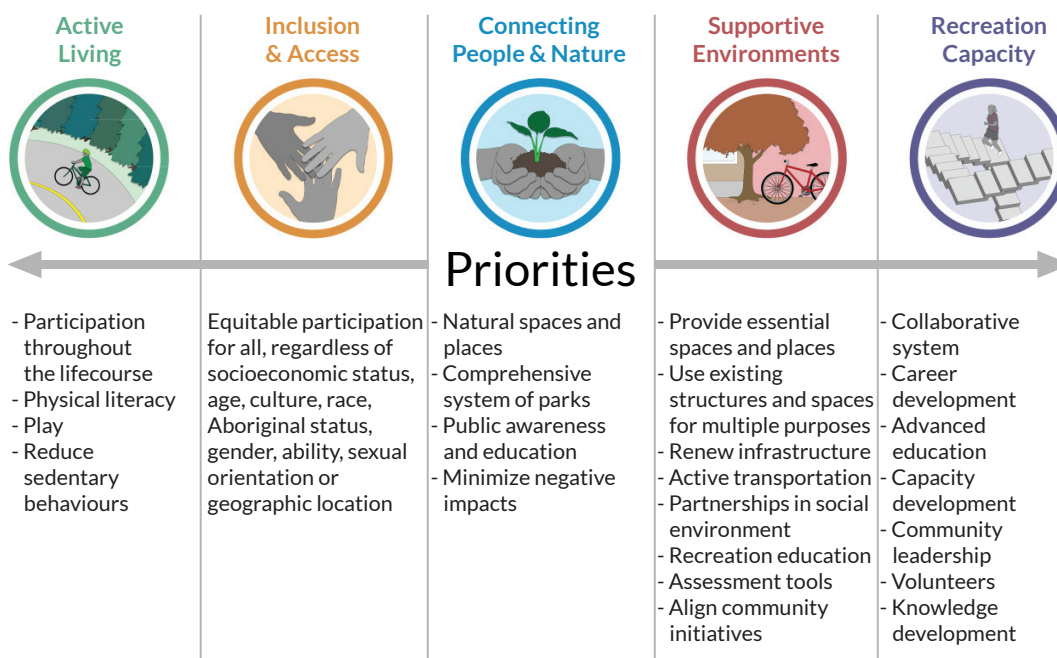
Values

Public Good	Inclusion & Equity	Sustainability	Lifelong Participation
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Principles of Operation

Outcome-Driven	Quality & Relevance	Evidence-Based	Partnerships	Innovation
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Goals



Sport for Life

Overview: Sport for Life exists to build physical literacy and improve the quality of sport based on long-term athlete development (LTAD). LTAD is a nationally accepted, eight stage framework for developing physical literacy among individuals of all ages and athletic goals. National and Provincial Sport Organizations in Canada are mandated to demonstrate alignment with LTAD principles.

The Eight Stages of LTAD

Awareness and First Involvement

To engage in sport and physical activity, individuals must be aware of what opportunities exist for them, and when they try an activity for the first time, it is critical that the experience is positive. That is why Sport for Life emphasizes the two stages of Awareness and First Involvement.



Train to Train

Athletes enter the Train to Train stage when they have developed proficiency in the athlete development performance components (physical, technical-tactical, mental, and emotional). Rapid physical growth, the development of sporting capability, and commitment occurs in this stage. Athletes will generally specialize in one sport towards the end of the stage. A progression from local to provincial competition occurs over the course of the stage.



Active Start

From 0-6 years, boys and girls need to be engaged in daily active play. Through play and movement, they develop the fundamental movement skills and learn how to link them together. At this stage developmentally appropriate activities will help participants feel competent and comfortable participating in a variety of fun and challenging activities and games.



Train to Compete

Athletes enter the Train to Compete stage when they are proficient in sport-specific Train to Train athlete development components (physical, technical-tactical, mental, and emotional). Athletes are training nearly full-time and competing at the national level while being introduced to international competition.



FUNDamentals

In the FUNDamentals stage, participants develop fundamental movement skills in structured and unstructured environments for play. The focus is on providing fun, inclusive, multisport, and developmentally appropriate sport and physical activity. These experiences will result in the participant developing a wide range of movement skill along with the confidence and desire to participate.



Train to Win

Athletes in the Train to Win stage are world class competitors who are competing at the highest level of competition in the world (e.g. Olympics, Paralympics, World Championships, World Cups).



Learn to Train

Once a wide range of fundamental movement skills have been acquired, participants progress into the Learn to Train stage leading to understanding basic rules, tactics, and strategy in games and refinement of sport specific skills. There are opportunities to participate in multiple sports with competitions focused on skill development and retention. Games and activities are inclusive, fun, and skill based. At the end of the Learn to Train stage, participants grow (or progress) towards sport excellence in the Train to Train stage or being Active for Life, either by being Competitive for Life or Fit for Life.



Active for Life

Individuals who have a desire to be physically active are in the Active for Life stage. A participant may choose to be Competitive for Life or Fit for Life and, if inclined, give back as a sport or physical activity leader. Competitive for Life includes those who compete in any organized sport recreation leagues to Master Games. Fit for Life includes active people who participate in non-competitive physical activity.



Active Alberta: 2011-2021

Overview: Finalized by the provincial government in 2010, the document outlines a 10-year policy to refocus government initiatives, challenge partners, and encourage Albertans to become more active. Active Alberta, sets out a vision for recreation, active living and sport: Albertans enjoy a high quality of life, improved health and wellness, strong communities, economic benefits and personal fulfillment, through recreation, active living and sport.

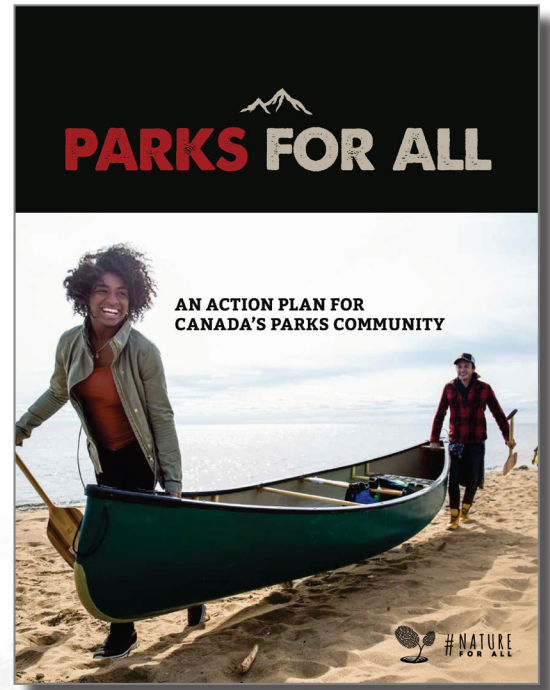
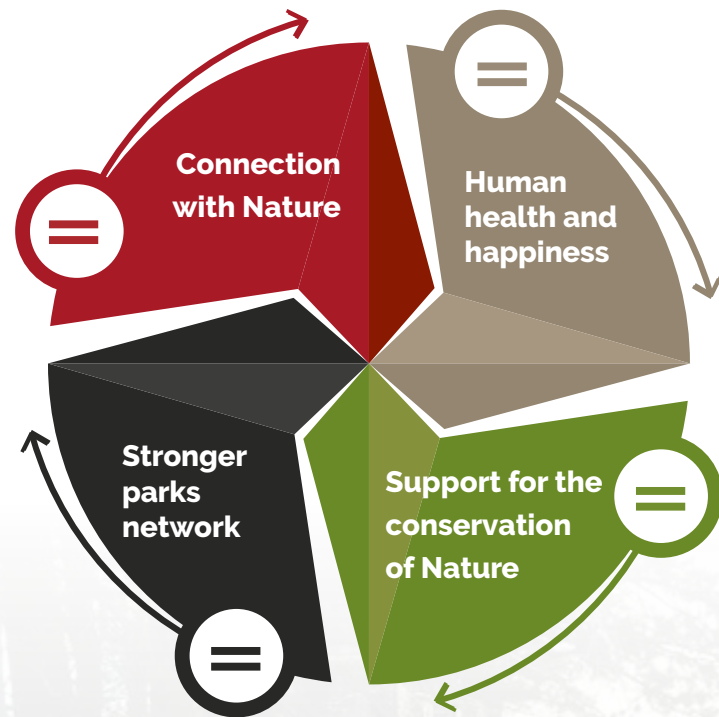


Role of Municipal Governments as outlined in Active Alberta: 2011-2021

- Ensure availability, affordability and accessibility of a broad range of recreation, active living and sport opportunities.
- Undertake regular assessment to determine community needs or interests.
- Facilitate local development through municipal policy, bylaws, as well as program design and delivery.
- Provide incentives and services to programs.
- Coordinate the best use of community resources.
- Build, operate, and maintain infrastructure and facilities.
- Make best efforts to the recreation needs of community.
- Advise and consult with other levels of government regarding sector development initiatives.
- Advocate on behalf of community-based recreation, active living and sport initiatives to other levels of government, and within other service sectors.
- Support the volunteer and not-for-profit sector in the provision of recreation, active living and sport opportunities.
- Optimize access and use of public recreation facilities.

Parks for All: An Action Plan for Canada's Parks Community

Overview: The Parks for All document was developed to create a common and shared vision and strategic approach for parks, urban and rural, in Canada. The Plan also helps more fully articulate the benefits of providing quality park spaces and the importance of preserving these valued and critical spaces into the future.



3

Regional Context

In this section:

- **Profile of the region.**
- **The current recreation context in the region (service delivery approaches and overview of current infrastructure).**

Regional Profile¹



The St. Paul-Elk Point Region is located in northeast Alberta, directly accessible by several highway routes, approximately two hours from the Edmonton Capital Region and one hour from the Saskatchewan border.



Approximately 54% of the regional population live in the small urban communities of St. Paul and Elk Point, with 46% of the regional population living in the County.



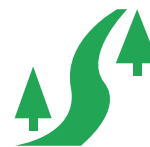
The County of St. Paul is bordered by five other municipalities; the M.D. of Bonnyville to the northeast, County of Vermilion River to the southeast, County of Two Hills to the southwest, Smoky Lake County to the west and Lac la Biche County to the north.



There are several Indigenous communities located within or adjacent to the region, including: Whitefish (Goodfish) Lake First Nations, Saddle Lake First Nations, University nuhelot'ine thaiyots'į nistameyimākanak Blue Quills, Kehewin Cree Nation, Frog Lake First Nations and Fishing Lake Metis Settlement. St. Paul, Elk Point and Hamlets in the region are primary service centres for many of these communities.



The proportion of children and youth (ages 0-14) in the region is generally consistent with provincial figures. However the region has a lower proportion of adults ages 15 to 64 and a high proportion of seniors ages 65 and older.



The Iron Horse Trail, a major regional attraction and recreation amenity, bisects the region and travels through or adjacent to a number of communities. The Trail was developed along a decommissioned railway and has become a model across Western Canada for other similar projects.



Regional population of 13,364 residents.



The St. Paul Education Regional School Division No. 1 serves approximately 3,925 students across 14 schools.



The area is home to numerous community and regional events, including: Cabane à Sucre, Lakeland Rodeo Association Finals, Stoney Lake Rodeo and the Iron Horse Ultramarathon.

¹ Population data is from the 2016 Statistics Canada Census of the Population unless otherwise noted

St. Paul-Elk Point Region

Summer Village of Horseshoe Bay

- Population 49 residents (2017 municipal census 73)
- Located directly north of St. Paul on Vincent Lake.
- Established in 1985 and includes 145 residential lots.

HORSESHOE BAY

Town of St. Paul

- Population of 5,827 residents (2017 municipal census 5,963).
- Incorporated as a Town in 1936.
- Strong French-Canadian history.
- Tourist attractions include museums, Lagasse Park and the infamous UFO Landing Pad.

ST. PAUL

County of St. Paul

- Population of 6,036 residents (2017 municipal census 6,468).
- The County covers a land area of 3,317 sq. km.
- Hamlets located within the County: Ashmont, Heinsburg, Lafond, Lindbergh, Lottie Lake, Mallaig, Riverview, St. Edouard, St. Lina and St. Vincent.

ELK POINT

Town of Elk Point

- Population of 1,452 residents (2016 municipal census 1,643).
- Close proximity to the North Saskatchewan River which drives a number of recreation and leisure opportunities.
- Tourist attraction in or nearby the town include Fort George Buckingham House, the Windsor Salt Plant and a large carved statue of Peter Fidler.

Note: Primary population data for the region has been sourced from Statistics Canada for consistency.

The Current Provision of Recreation Opportunities in the Region

The provision of recreation and active living opportunities in the St. Paul-Elk Point region involves a diverse array of organizations, which includes local municipalities, not for profit community groups and institutional organizations (e.g. schools). This recreation delivery “system” is bounded by a number of collaborations and partnerships, both formal and informal, that facilitate the existence of facilities and the activities that take place in them. Summarized in the following chart is an overview of key recreation provision factors in each of the partner municipalities. *Note that maps outlining existing recreation assets in the region can be found in the appendix.*

Partner Municipality	Key Recreation Provision Considerations
County of St. Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own and operate campgrounds throughout the County. • Cost sharing agreement with the Town of St. Paul and provides financial support to not for profit facility operators in Elk Point. These contributions have totaled ~\$375,000 annually. • Through the County’s Recreation Facilities Grant, an additional ~\$110,000 is provided annually to support facilities in the region and additional funding for capital grants. • The County also provide capital grants outside of the supports mentioned on an as needed basis. • The County has representation on the Town of St. Paul’s Recreation Board.
Town of St. Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town of St. Paul owns and operates a number of major facilities including the Clancy Richard Arena, Aquatic and Fitness Centre and outdoor park spaces in the community. • The CAP Arena Committee and the town have an agreement whereby the CAP Arena Committee is responsible for capital costs and the town operates the arena. • The Town of St. Paul has a Parks and Recreation Board that is appointed by Town Council. The Board acts in an advisory capacity to Town Council and to the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department on parks and recreation related matters. • The town has formalized operating agreements with a number of non-profit organizations (whereby these organizations operate facilities and/or provide programs on behalf of the Town). These organizations include: St. Paul and District Minor Ball Association, St. Paul Soccer Facilities Society and Visual Arts, St. Paul Curling Club, St. Paul and District AG Society and the St. Paul Senior Citizen’s Club. • The Town contributes ~\$80,000 per year to support local user groups. • The Town has a joint use agreement in place with St. Paul Education Regional School Division No. 1.
Town of Elk Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not for profit community organizations play a key role in the operations of major facilities in Elk Point. The A.G. Ross Arena and C.G. Baker Centre Riding Arena are operated by Elk Point and District Agricultural Society. • The Elk Point Curling facility is operated by the Elk Point Curling Club Society and the Allied Arts Centre is operated by the Allied Arts Society. • The Town also invest ~\$80,000 in local community groups that provide recreation opportunities to residents. • The Town has dedicated staff that help facilitate the provision of recreation programming in the community.
Summer Village of Horseshoe Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The summer village employs two part-time employees to maintain the park site and community hall.

4. The Benefits of Providing Recreation Opportunities

In this section:

- Research that supports the importance of providing quality and accessible recreation opportunities.

Public sector providers of recreation opportunities are often required to justify the ongoing investment of funds into recreation facilities, programs and events. However, in recent decades there has been increasing recognition of the wide ranging benefits that are accrued through an investment in recreation and other quality of life opportunities. This belief has been backed by research and reflected in strategic planning documents developed by all levels of government.

The National Benefits HUB is a research database which provides access to numerous resources that identify the positive impacts of recreation and related activities (e.g. sport, fitness, arts/culture, heritage and parks). Identified as follows are the eight key messages from the National Benefits HUB, with corresponding evidence related to how recreation and culture can positively impact a community and its residents.

Recreation is essential to personal health and wellbeing:

- Increased leisure time and physical activity improves life expectancy.¹
- Physical activity contributes to improved mental health and reduced rates of depression.²
- Participation in physical activity can reduce workplace related stress.³
- The provision of green spaces has been linked with a number of health and wellbeing benefits including; increased physical activity, reduced risk of obesity, minimized utilization of the healthcare system, and stress reduction.⁴

Recreation provides the key to balanced human development:

- Regular physical activity is likely to provide children with the optimum physiological condition for maximizing learning.⁵
- Low income students who are involved in arts activities have higher academic achievement and are more likely to go to college.⁶
- The arts and other forms of creativity can have profound individual social outcomes and generate a deeper sense of place and local community.⁷
- Individuals that participate in physical activity in a social setting have improved psychological and social health, and often also benefit from increased self-awareness and personal growth.⁸

Recreation provides a foundation for quality of life:

- High quality public spaces can enhance the sense of community in new neighbourhoods.⁹
- Community sport facilities have positive benefits related to increased accessibility, exposure, participation, perceptions of success and improved sport experiences.¹⁰



Recreation reduces self-destructive and anti-social behaviour:

- Youth participation in recreational activities such as camps increases leadership and social capacities.¹¹
- Participation in recreation and leisure related activities by low income and other at risk children and youth populations can result in decreased behavioural/emotional problems, decreased use of emergency services, and enhanced physical and psycho-social health of families.¹²
- Teen athletes are less likely to use illicit drugs, smoke or to be suicidal.¹³

Recreation builds strong families and healthy communities:

- People with an active interest in the arts contribute more to society than those with little or no such interest.¹⁴
- Evidence indicates that adults who attend art museums, art galleries, or live arts performances are far more likely than non-attendees to vote, volunteer, or take part in community events.¹⁵
- Structured sport and recreational activities can help foster a stronger sense of community among children and youth.¹⁶



10 Henderson, K., Scanlin, M., Whitaker, L., et al. (2005) Intentionality and Youth Development Through Camp Experiences. Canadian Congress on Leisure Research. 11th, Nanaimo, British Columbia.

Recreation reduces health care, social service and police/justice costs:

- Physical inactivity has a number of direct and indirect financial impacts on all levels of government.¹⁷
- Parks and recreation programming during non-school hours can reduce costs associated with juvenile delinquency and obesity.¹⁸
- Increased fitness leads to lowered risk factors for substance abuse among youth populations.¹⁹

Recreation is a significant economic generator:

- Recent Canadian research indicated that cultural activities have the potential to be significant drivers of economic outputs and employment.²⁰
- Evidence suggests that creative activity shapes the competitive character of a city by enhancing both its innovative capacity and the quality of place so crucial to attracting and retaining skilled workers.²¹

Green spaces are essential to environmental and ecological wellbeing:

- Sustainable public green spaces provide crucial areas for residents of all demographics to be physically and socially active.²²
- Increasing green spaces in urban centres has a number of positive environmental outcomes, which can increase sustainability and lower long term infrastructure costs.²³
- When children and youth have positive experiences with parks and green spaces, they are more likely to have stronger attitudes towards conservation and preservation of the environment as adults.²⁴



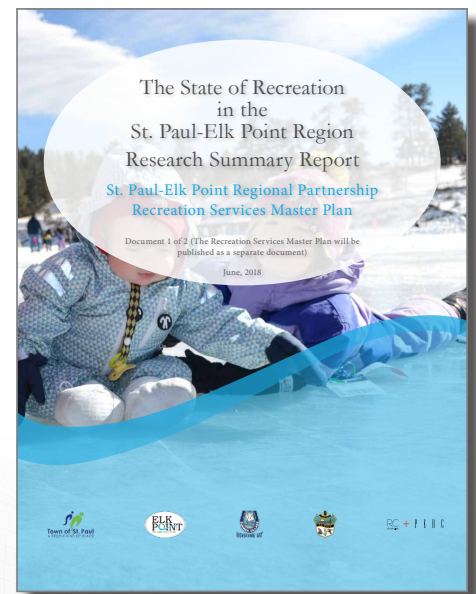
23 Groth, P. (2008). Quantifying the Greenhouse Gas Benefits of Urban Parks. San Francisco, California: The Trust for Public Land.

5. Research and Engagement – Key Findings Summary

In this section:

- Summary of key findings from the State of Recreation in the St. Paul-Elk Point Region Research Summary Report

The detailed research and engagement findings are published under separate cover in the State of Recreation in the St. Paul-Elk Point Region Research Summary Report. Please refer to this document for additional information on the summary points outlined in this section.



Overview – Research and Engagement Methodology

A variety of research and engagement methods were used to generate the information required to develop the Master Plan. Using a diverse array of research and engagement methods provided the project team with a well-rounded understanding of the current recreation landscape in the region and potential future areas of focus.


Project Engagement Methods & Participation



Household Survey
1,258 Responses



Community Group Survey
30 Responses



Student Survey
1,447 Responses




Stakeholder Discussions
~ 50 Groups/Organizations
Participated

Additional Research Methods




Review of trends and leading practices.



Benchmarking (comparison to other regions and municipalities).



Population and demographics analysis.



Inventory of current recreation facilities and spaces in the region.



Physical assessment of selected facilities.

Key Findings Summary



Current level of Satisfaction

- Current levels of satisfaction are relatively high, however opportunity for improvement exists. 75% of residents indicated satisfaction to some extent with the overall available recreation opportunities currently offered in St. Paul-Elk Point Region (28% were very satisfied and 47% were somewhat satisfied).
- The highest level of satisfaction was displayed by residents of the town of St. Paul.



Resident Perspectives on Regional Collaboration and Municipal Responsibility

- Residents have some desire for increased regional collaboration in the delivery of recreation services.
- Over 40% of respondents indicated that some of the recreation facilities and spaces in the region should be considered as the responsibility of all municipalities.



Importance of Recreation

- 89% of residents indicated that recreation opportunities are important to the attractiveness, appeal and success of the region. 89% of residents indicated that recreation is important to the community and region in which they live and 86% of households believe recreation is important to their household's quality of life.



Willingness to Pay & User Fees

- Almost 50% of respondents said they would not be willing to pay additional property taxes if the money was used to support enhancements to recreation opportunities in the region, whereas 30% of respondents said they would be willing to pay.
- Over 40% of respondents would be willing to pay increased user fees to support enhancements to recreation in the region.
- Almost 70% of respondents felt that the best way to fund public recreation and culture opportunities would be to through a combination of user fees and grant support and supported through tax funding and eligible grant.



Barriers to Participation in Recreation Opportunities

- The Resident Survey identified that approximately one-fifth of residents are limited in their recreation participation by the following factors: being unaware of opportunities, health issues and cost or participation. A common barrier frequently mentioned in the Student Survey was cost to participate (44% of respondents). Other commonly reported barriers to participation for youth were location of facilities (47%) and lack of facilities (41%).



Current Recreation Preferences & Volunteerism

- Residents reported that the most utilized amenities were the Iron Horse Trail, Recreation Centre and Trails and Parks Spaces (Town of St. Paul).
- A little more than half of residents travel outside the region to participate in recreation.
- Over fifty percent of residents indicated that 16–20 minutes was an acceptable amount of travel time to access recreation opportunities (20% indicated that 15 minutes or less and 20% indicated that 31–45 minutes was acceptable).
- Over 50% of respondents preferred indicated the following activities as their favorite recreational activities: BBQ/social gatherings, camping and gardening. Other outdoor activities such as walking/jogging, boating, fishing and hunting were also favorite activities for many residents.
- Many residents volunteer, the highest number volunteering in sport activities.
- Over 60% of respondents volunteer to enrich the community and over 40% to support children's activities.



Support and Promotion of Recreation

- 70% of respondents felt that support should be provided to the local volunteer and non-profit community involved in providing recreation opportunities.
- Over 70% of residents felt that municipalities should make an effort to encourage participation.



Future Needs/Demands for Recreation Infrastructure

- Over 50% of residents and 75% of students feel that new/upgraded recreation facilities should be developed in the region.
- Top five indoor facility priorities (from the Resident Survey): indoor track, leisure swimming pool, fitness/wellness facilities, gymnasium spaces and child /play spaces. Common top five priorities for students were leisure swimming pool and indoor track (Student Survey). Other top five indoor facility priorities for students were: indoor courts/gymnasium spaces, rifle/archery range and indoor pool/climbing wall.
- Top five outdoor facility priorities (from the Resident Survey): campgrounds, natural areas, toboggan hills, multi-use trails and nordic ski/snow shoeing trails. A common top five priority for students were campgrounds (Student Survey), Other top five outdoor facility priorities were: outdoor swimming pool, rifle/archery range, ball diamonds and BMX bicycle park.
- When prioritizing criteria for provision of recreation facilities and spaces, in an environment with limited resources, over 50% of residents felt a focus should be put on those that are multi-purpose and meets the needs of many. Over 40% prioritized criteria that responded to a request from the community or where available funding and grants would lower the cost.
- Trends suggest that there will continue to be a demand for infrastructure that supports spontaneous/unstructured recreation.
- The region is experiencing modest levels of growth. Based on historical growth indicators, it is reasonable to assume that by 2028 recreation services will need to be provided for over 14,000 regional residents.
- The activities that residents were most interested in trying were pickleball, dance, hiking/walking, golfing, tennis and swimming.

Preliminary Infrastructure Priorities

Preliminary infrastructure priorities were identified based on the engagement findings presented in the St. Paul-Elk Point Region Research Summary Report. It is important to note that these preliminary priorities were identified as a basis for the strategic analysis and further criteria based prioritization presented in Section 8 of this Master Plan document.

Household

Survey: two check (✓) marks if top five household priority; 1 check (✓) for priorities six to ten.

Community

Group

Questionnaire/ Stakeholder

Interviews: 1 check (✓) if top ten priority in Community Group Questionnaire or frequently mentioned in stakeholder interview

Student Survey:

1 check (✓) if top ten student priority in Student Survey

Community Priority	Indoor Amenity	Household Survey	Community Group Questionnaire/ Stakeholder Interviews	Student Survey
1	Indoor track	✓ ✓	✓	✓
1	Leisure swimming pool	✓ ✓	✓	✓
1	Fitness/wellness facilities	✓ ✓	✓	✓
1	Gymnasium spaces	✓ ✓	✓	✓
2	Ice arenas sports facilities	✓	✓	✓
2	Multi-purpose sport surface	✓	✓	✓
2	Child play space	✓ ✓	✓	
3	Seniors' activity spaces	✓	✓	
3	Program spaces	✓	✓	
3	Indoor field		✓	✓
3	Pool climbing wall	✓		✓
3	Performing arts theatre	✓	✓	
3	Rifle / archery range	✓		✓
4	Youth centre	✓		
4	Show facilities		✓	
4	Library			✓
4	Court sports		✓	
4	Fine arts spaces			✓
4	Curling facilities		✓	
4	Meeting spaces		✓	
4	Event facilities		✓	
5	Ag facilities			
5	Dance program space			
5	Leisure skating			
5	Historical display spaces			
5	Social/banquet spaces			
5	Combative sports space			
5	Community group offices			
5	Lane swimming pool			

Household

Survey: two check (✓) marks if top five household priority; 1 check (✓) for priorities six to ten.

Community Group**Questionnaire/ Stakeholder**

Interviews: 1 check (✓) if top ten priority in Community Group Questionnaire or frequently mentioned in stakeholder interview

Student Survey:

1 check (✓) if top ten student priority in Student Survey

Community Priority	Outdoor Amenity	Household Survey	Community Group Questionnaire/ Stakeholder Interviews	Student Survey
1	Campgrounds—serviced	✓ ✓	✓	✓
1	Natural Areas	✓ ✓	✓	✓
2	Hockey rinks	✓	✓	✓
2	More trees	✓	✓	✓
2	Toboggan hills	✓ ✓	✓	
2	Multi-use trails (non-motorized)	✓ ✓	✓	
2	Nordic skiing/snowshoe trails	✓ ✓	✓	
3	Water / spray parks		✓	✓
3	Event grounds (special events)	✓	✓	
3	Pickleball courts	✓	✓	
3	Dog walking area	✓	✓	
3	Picnic areas	✓	✓	
3	BMX parks		✓	✓
4	Amphitheatres		✓	
4	Ball diamonds			✓
4	Fire pits			✓
4	Swimming pool			✓
4	Mechanized trails		✓	
4	Golf courses		✓	
4	Playgrounds and tot lots		✓	
4	Skateboard parks		✓	
4	Athletic grounds			✓
4	Beach volleyball courts			✓
4	Heritage preservation areas		✓	
5	Recreational skating areas			
5	Agricultural areas			
5	Skating trails			
5	Downtown landscaping			
5	Ornamental parks			
5	Mountain bike park			
5	Interpretive areas			
5	Soccer fields			
5	Disc golf			
5	Tennis courts			
5	Football fields			
5	Hard surfaces			
5	Rugby fields			

6. A Foundation for Recreation in the Region

In this section:

- A Vision for Recreation in the St. Paul – Elk Point Region.
- Collaborative Framework for Recreation in the St. Paul – Elk Point Region (including Goals and a Targeted Level of Regional Collaboration).

A Vision for Recreation in the St. Paul – Elk Point Region

The intent of a Vision statement is to declare a desired future state and build consensus around mutual objectives. The Vision statement for recreation in the St. Paul – Elk Point region also provides a high level benchmark from which to base and measure the success of future initiatives between partners, stakeholders and residents.

“Residents and visitors to the St. Paul – Elk Point Region will continue to enjoy a diverse array of recreation and active living opportunities that are delivered in an efficient, quality and collaborative manner.”

Collaborative Framework for Recreation in the St. Paul – Elk Point Region

By undertaking the development of a Regional Recreation Master Plan, the municipal partners in the region have acknowledged the importance of viewing recreation services with a regional lens and exploring potential areas of collaboration. Furthermore, engagement with residents identified that there is a broader recognition of the benefits that can be accrued by working together at a regional level.

Resident Perspectives on Regional Collaboration (from the Household Survey)

- 80% of regional residents believe that municipalities in the region should work together in the provision of recreation opportunities. *These findings were consistent across all communities.
- 43% of regional residents believe that some major facilities in the region should be considered “regional” (45% were “unsure” and 12% indicated “no”).

Critical to the success of future collaborative efforts will be achieving the benefits that can be accrued by working together (e.g. increased efficiency, leveraging / maximizing available resources) with balancing the unique and diverse needs of individual communities.

Outlined as follows is a Framework to guide future collaboration on recreation services in the region. This Framework includes:

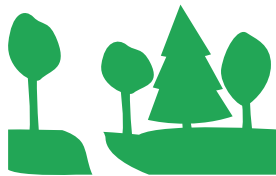
- **Goals** for recreation services in the region that guide investment for all partner municipalities.
- A **Targeted Level of Regional Collaboration** that outlines in what areas, and how, the partner municipalities will collaborate in the provision of recreation services. Included in the Targeted Level of Regional Collaboration are suggested approaches for infrastructure (facilities and spaces) and overall service delivery.

Goals

Recreation services in the St. Paul – Elk Point Region will...



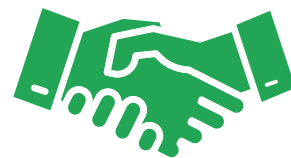
1. Prioritize getting more people, more active.



2. Increase the appeal and attractiveness of the region for residents and visitors.



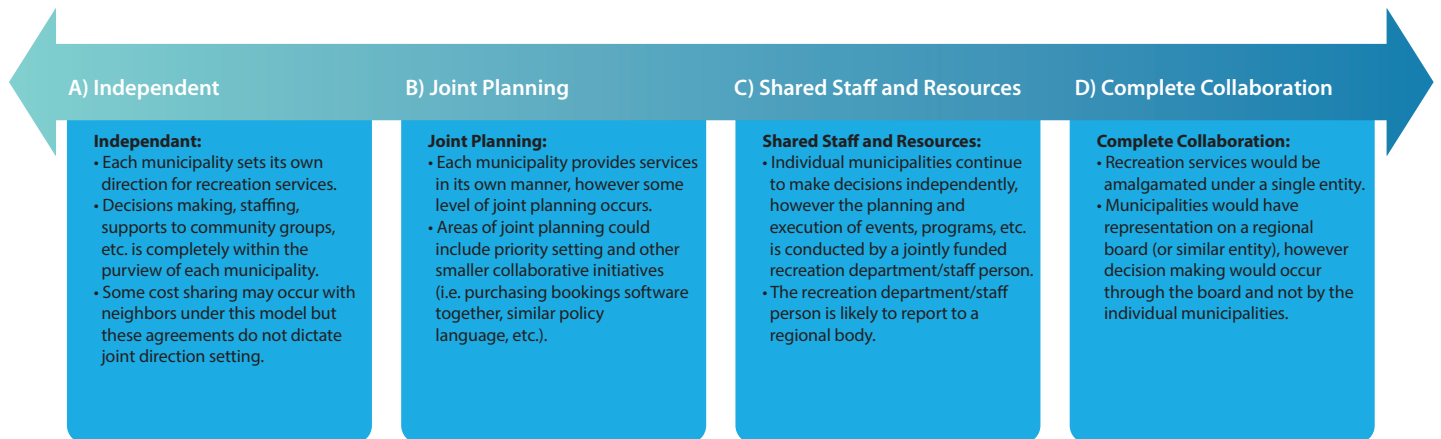
3. Use recreation as a mechanism to connect and build strong communities and bring the region together.



4. Maximize efficiency and effectiveness through regional collaboration.

Targeted Level of Regional Collaboration

A number of potential levels of collaboration could be considered in the region. Currently, some instances of joint planning occur, but are not formalized or embedded into the delivery model. The majority of recreation opportunities and associated decision making in the region occurs independently by each municipality. The following continuum illustrates and explains the different levels of collaboration that could be considered. This continuum was used as a basis for discussion in the development of a Master Plan and the identification of potential future approaches.



Outlined as follows are **suggested approaches for regional recreation** that leverage the benefits of collaboration while allowing for local needs and autonomy to be sustained where possible and beneficial. It is important to note that successful implementation of these approaches will require buy-in from all municipal partners in the region as well as many key stakeholder groups. If this approach is accepted, it will form the basis for the formalization of an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) related to recreation. As per the ICF requirements, this approach will require re-visiting every 5 years at a minimum.

A Potential Regional Approach to Recreation Service Provision

Outlined as follows is a suggested approach to guide key aspects of the overall delivery system for recreation in the region.



Governance

Suggested Approach: Create a regional recreation entity (committee or board) to oversee the provision of regional recreation services as prescribed in the Master Plan. Key functions of this entity should include:

- Implementation of the Master Plan and other future planning initiatives (including further clarity / definition regarding the proposed regional approach);
- Advocacy of regional recreation; and
- Provide recommendations to partner municipality Council's on matters related to recreation (e.g. funding agreements, policies, priorities).

This entity should include elected official and senior staff representation from each of the partner municipalities.

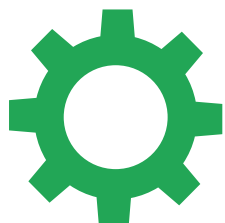


Policy Development

Suggested Approach: Where possible, develop standardized policies for recreation. Potential focus areas for policy alignment should include:

- Rates and fees
- Allocations
- Joint use agreements
- Grant funding
- Partnerships
- Asset management (e.g. policies guiding lifecycle budgeting and facility assessments)

**This may require matching bylaws or other documentation in each of the partner municipalities.*



Aligned Operational Functions

Suggested Approach: In the short to medium term (0-3 years), the partner municipalities should seek to streamline operational functions in the following areas of recreation service provision.

- Facility scheduling
- Accounting
- Data management
- Group and volunteer support
- Promotions and marketing

The streamlining of these operational functions should include:

- Development of consistent protocols, operational practices and systems;
- Development of consistent public materials (i.e. marketing and promotion materials, facility schedules, etc.); and
- Formalizing communications and collaboration between the staff responsible for each function in each of the partner municipalities (e.g. regular meetings).

After 3 years, the regional recreation committee or board should evaluate the successes of streamlining operational functions. A potential next step could include cost sharing on joint staff positions that would be regional in scope.

As many major facilities in the region are operated fully or partially by external not for profit organizations, a key aspect of streamlining the operational functions identified will require the input and involvement of these organizations.



Partnership Development

Suggested Approach: Where possible, establish working partnerships between the municipal partners and key community stakeholders. Possible areas for collaboration and engagement with stakeholders include:

- Programming review
- Volunteer management
- Creation of joint use agreements
- Community relationship building

Potential community partnerships could include engaging: industry; local board or authorities, such as the School Board; neighbouring communities.

It is important to note that the modernized Municipal Government Act will require municipalities to create joint use planning agreements (JUPA) for all school authorities operating within their respective boundaries.

Relevant to this plan, JUPAs will outline the process for discussing the use of school facilities, municipal facilities, and playing fields on municipal and school reserves in the municipality. This will include matters relating to the maintenance of the facilities and fields and the payment of fees and other liabilities associated with them. JUPAs will also outline provisions for the allocation of land for new schools and the disposal of surplus school sites.

A Potential Regional Approach to Recreation Infrastructure

The following chart presents a classification system for recreation infrastructure in the region. This classification system is intended to outline how facilities and spaces will be funded and planned in the future. It is important to note that aspects of this classification system, notably funding approaches and further clarification of the potential facilities in each class, will require additional discussion and refinement.

Regional Facility Definition Considerations

Classification	Funding Approach (Capital and Operating)*	Planning Approach	Potential Facilities in Class	Rationale for Classification
Regional Class A	Shared equitably by all municipal partners.	Major planning efforts to occur on a joint basis (i.e. exploration of expansion, major renovation, replacement, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquatics facilities • Regional trails • Major performing arts facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital and operating cost is high, only one of each facility in region
Regional Class B	Responsibility of all municipalities but weighted to the municipality in which the facility resides.	Planning led by the primary municipality (where the facility resides) but involves all partner municipalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice arenas • Curling facilities • Major sport field complexes • Field house facilities • Major campgrounds and day use areas • Large community hall and social gathering spaces (>500 capacity) • Destination skateboard / BMX facilities • Major agricultural grounds / outdoor event facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital and operating cost is high, if facility meets specified attributes then it is a regional asset (not every facility in the class is regional though), multiple facilities in region that could be managed / coordinated regionally to improve efficiency
Local	Funding is the primary responsibility of the municipality in which the facility resides.	Planning conducted on a local basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community parks spaces and amenities e.g. playgrounds, gathering and community event areas, outdoor rinks, community trails, school and community centre gymnasiums, outdoor courts, small-medium community halls (<500 capacity), stand-alone and community level ball diamonds and sport fields • Small scale arts and cultural facilities (e.g. gallery, studio space, small performance space) • Youth centres • Seniors centres • Libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific to local needs and demands, do not serve regional purpose as the benefit is highly concentrated in the local municipality

*For Regional Class A and B facilities, capital and operating funding contributions may not be completely aligned.

Regional Facility Responsibility Sharing Considerations

Considerations for developing new or enhanced cost, or responsibility sharing (which is expected to occur during Plan implementation) should include the following:

1. Sharing should be based on benefiting market area (geographic), not participant origin or utilization statistics related to the asset; recreation provides benefits which residents cannot escape even if they don't use facilities or programs
2. Sharing should consider both population served and ability to pay (possibly defined through municipal tax assessment or financial reserves) within benefitting market area (geographic)
3. Benefiting market area should be defined through known or estimated thresholds where travel distance becomes a barrier to participation
4. The host community for a facility or service gets more intense benefit from a facility or space than other regional communities
5. Recreation amenities are part of the social fabric of regional communities, they drive community and regional pride and anchor residents; this intangible needs to be added to other known benefits of recreation and weighed against required investment in recreation

7. Service Delivery Strategies

In this section:

- Additional strategies and tactics to enhance the provision of recreation opportunities in the region.

The Goals and Framework presented in Section 6 outline an overarching foundation for the regional delivery of recreation services. **Provided in this section are strategies that build off of the Goals and Framework by identifying specific initiatives and actions that should be undertaken by all of the regional partners to enhance the recreational opportunities available to residents. The forthcoming strategies have been developed with regional needs and opportunities in mind, but could also be implemented locally by each of the partner municipalities.**

Strategy #1: Enhance the capacity building support provided to volunteers and community organizations.

Potential Tactics:

- Provide regular training seminars and other development opportunities.
- Link community organizations to regional and provincial training and development opportunities (e.g. training provided by provincial sport organizations).
- Create mechanisms (e.g. website) to link residents with volunteer opportunities.
- Engage with groups on an ongoing basis to identify successes, challenges and potential areas of support.

Benefits of Implementing the Strategy:

- Sustains and enhances community organizations that provide recreation programs and events.
- Improves the quality of community provided programming.
- Increased capacity among groups may present the opportunities for some organizations to expand program offerings and meet emerging needs.

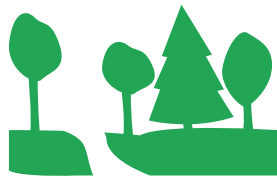
From the Research & Engagement:

- Provincial and national frameworks and strategic planning documents reflect the importance of community groups in providing recreation opportunities.
- Stakeholder groups in the region expressed that some groups struggle with volunteer “burn-out” and capacity issues.
- Community groups play a significant role in operating facilities in the region.
- When asked about motivations for volunteering, the top two reasons identified by residents were to Enrich the Community (62%) and Support Children’s Activities (42%).

Alignment with the Goals for Recreation Services in the Region:



1. Prioritize getting more people, more active.



2. Increase the appeal and attractiveness of the region for residents and visitors.



3. Use recreation as a mechanism to connect and build strong communities and bring the region together.



4. Maximize efficiency and effectiveness through regional collaboration.

Strategy #2: Enhance the promotions and marketing of recreation (and related) opportunities in the region.

Potential Tactics:

- Develop a common brand for recreation in the region.
- Publish a regional recreation guide (paper copy and/or online).
- Ensure that promotions and marketing messaging focuses on both specific opportunities as well as the overall benefits of participation.
- Engage with newcomers, youth and seniors to identify the best methods to promote recreation opportunities to residents that may not be fully immersed in recreation.
- Ensure that successes are celebrated and leveraged to demonstrate value from investment in recreation.

Benefits of Implementing the Strategy:

- Maximizes the participation in recreation programs and activities.
- Ensures that the ongoing investment made in recreation by the partner municipalities provides the broadest public benefit.
- Creates common messaging and consistency in recreation branding.

From the Research & Engagement:

- Residents in the region indicated that the most significant barrier to participation in recreation was being unaware of opportunities (22% identified this as a barrier).
- 71% of residents in the region indicated that municipalities in the region should work together to motivate and encourage residents to participate in recreation.
- Stakeholders and community groups identified that opportunities exist to better promote recreation, sport and leisure opportunities.

Alignment with the Goals for Recreation Services in the Region:



1. Prioritize getting more people, more active.



2. Increase the appeal and attractiveness of the region for residents and visitors.



3. Use recreation as a mechanism to connect and build strong communities and bring the region together.



4. Maximize efficiency and effectiveness through regional collaboration.

Strategy #3: Ensure clarity and / or consistency regarding the grant funding processes and decision making.

Potential Tactics:

- To the best degree possible, align the grant processes and policies across the region (including application and reporting protocols).
- Publish an annual report that identifies grant recipients and outcomes (benefits of funding provided).

Benefits of Implementing the Strategy:

- Increases transparency.
- Helps better communicate the benefits of an ongoing municipal and regional investment in recreation (and related) opportunities.

From the Research & Engagement:

- Stakeholders and community groups expressed that they would like to see improved clarity and information sharing as to how grant funding decisions are made.
- Municipalities in the region are significant contributors to recreation, providing funding for facility operations, events, programming and numerous other initiatives.

Alignment with the Goals for Recreation Services in the Region:



1. Prioritize getting more people, more active.



2. Increase the appeal and attractiveness of the region for residents and visitors.



3. Use recreation as a mechanism to connect and build strong communities and bring the region together.



4. Maximize efficiency and effectiveness through regional collaboration.

Strategy #4: Provide additional training and development opportunities.

Potential Tactics:

- Continue to ensure that opportunities exist for elected officials, volunteers and staff to attend provincial training opportunities provided by sector organizations such as the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, the Alberta Association of Recreation Facility Personnel and applicable provincial sport organizations.
- Consider approaching training and development from a regional perspective (e.g. identifying opportunities for staff strategically as a resources and, where appropriate, pooling resources).

Benefits of Implementing the Strategy:

- Enhances staff recruitment and retention.
- Enhances skills and knowledge.
- Further enables knowledge and skill transfer from staff to volunteers and community organizations.

From the Research & Engagement:

- Partnerships and collaborations are a key trend in the recreation sector.
- Many provincial and national recreation and sport organizations have placed an emphasis on training and education as a key pillar of their organizational mandate.
- While overall resident satisfaction levels are relatively high (28% of residents are “completely satisfied” with the availability of recreation opportunities and 47% are “somewhat satisfied”), room for improvement exists. Increased staff skill levels and competencies are likely to enhance the overall quality of service offerings.

Alignment with the Goals for Recreation Services in the Region:



1. Prioritize getting more people, more active.



2. Increase the appeal and attractiveness of the region for residents and visitors.



3. Use recreation as a mechanism to connect and build strong communities and bring the region together.



4. Maximize efficiency and effectiveness through regional collaboration.

Strategy #5: Undertake a Needs Assessment every 5 years to track progress and update the Master Plan.

Potential Tactics:

- Allocate appropriate resources (financial and human).
- Assign responsibility to staff and elected officials as required (e.g. the suggested new Regional Recreation Committee or Board).

Benefits of Implementing the Strategy:

- Identifies trends in participation, satisfaction levels, demands, etc.
- Helps identify the success and impact of Master Plan implementation.
- Provides up to date information that can inform other planning initiatives.
- Help meet ICF requirements to revisit regional collaboration every five years.

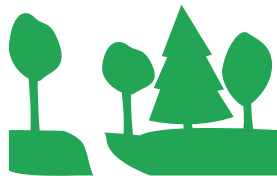
From the Research & Engagement:

- Currently, more than half (52% of regional residents support new / upgraded infrastructure. Tracking this level of demand will be important as future decisions are made.
- Provincial and national trends research suggest that recreation program and activity preferences are constantly evolving.
- Residents and stakeholder groups are generally supportive of regional collaboration.

Alignment with the Goals for Recreation Services in the Region:



1. Prioritize getting more people, more active.



2. Increase the appeal and attractiveness of the region for residents and visitors.



3. Use recreation as a mechanism to connect and build strong communities and bring the region together.



4. Maximize efficiency and effectiveness through regional collaboration.

Strategy #6: Develop a regional financial assistance program to ensure inclusion and access to recreation programs and opportunities.

Potential Tactics:

- Continue to support KidSport St. Paul (the chapter covers the region).
- Work collaboratively as a region to develop a financial assistance program that covers recreation, leisure and cultural programming. The Everybody Gets to Play toolkit, available through the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association provides one example of a toolkit that may be valuable as a starting point.²⁶

Benefits of Implementing the Strategy:

- Ensures that all residents have access to recreation, leisure and cultural programs.
- Further uses of recreation as a mechanism to build strong and vibrant communities.
- Supports participation in community programming, the majority of which is offered by not for profit organizations.

From the Research & Engagement:

- 21% of residents identified “cost to participate” as a barrier.
- 89% of residents believe that recreation opportunities are important to the community and region in which they live, while 86% believe that recreation is important to their own household.

Alignment with the Goals for Recreation Services in the Region:



1. Prioritize getting more people, more active.



2. Increase the appeal and attractiveness of the region for residents and visitors.



3. Use recreation as a mechanism to connect and build strong communities and bring the region together.



4. Maximize efficiency and effectiveness through regional collaboration.

²⁶ <https://www.cpra.ca/toolkits/>

Strategy #7: Improve the collection and analysis of utilization data.

Potential Tactics:

- Create common templates and protocols across the region for data collection and work with facility operators to implement data ongoing collection.
- Require groups that receive funding support to provide participation and membership data.
- If viable, investigate purchasing bookings software.

Benefits of Implementing the Strategy:

- Provides valuable information that can inform future projects and decision making.

From the Research & Engagement:

- The collection of utilization data was a challenge during the Master Plan project.
- Partner municipalities are not currently collecting utilization data in a uniform and consistent manner.

Alignment with the Goals for Recreation Services in the Region:



1. Prioritize getting more people, more active.



2. Increase the appeal and attractiveness of the region for residents and visitors.



3. Use recreation as a mechanism to connect and build strong communities and bring the region together.



4. Maximize efficiency and effectiveness through regional collaboration.

8 Regional Recreation Infrastructure Strategies

In this section:







- Regional Amenity Strategies.
- A recommended Capital Investment Framework.
- Community Level Facility and Amenity Strategies.




Regional Amenity Strategies

Provided in this section are strategies for facility and amenity types that are deemed regional in nature (Regional Class A and Regional Class B as outlined in Section 6). These strategies outline a recommended future level of provision and, where applicable, identifies a suggested approach to future capital investment. It is important to note that these strategies assume that appropriate asset management (e.g. capital reserve budgeting) will occur for recreation infrastructure.

**As with other strategies and recommendations provided in the Master Plan, implementation will require collaboration and input from the community organizations that are involved in the operations of a number of these facility and amenity types.*

Facility / Amenity Type	Preliminary Infrastructure Priority Rank*	Current Supply (#)	Recommended Future Level of Provision (#)**	Additional Research and Engagement Considerations	Suggested Approach to Future Capital Investment
Regional Class A Facilities					
Aquatics facilities	T1 (leisure pool) T5 (lane pool)	1	↔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available data reflects relatively strong levels of use (although not at capacity) and an upward trend for visits over the past ~10 years. • Only indoor aquatics facility in the region. • High level of resident demand for amenity type. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake required investment to sustain pool for the short to medium term. • Work regionally to develop a long term strategy for replacement or major enhancement.
Regional trails	T2	1	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of resident demand. • Current operating model has proven successful. • Trails have strong alignment with Master Plan goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with the Iron Horse Trail organization to ensure sustainability. • Support new development and enhancement projects that demonstrate benefit to the region.

Facility / Amenity Type	Preliminary Infrastructure Priority Rank*	Current Supply (#)	Recommended Future Level of Provision (#)**	Additional Research and Engagement Considerations	Suggested Approach to Future Capital Investment
Major performing arts facilities	T3	1*		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dedicated medium size venue (300+ theatre/bowl seating) does not currently exist in the region. The Allied Arts Centre in Elk Point does provide a venue for large performances and events to occur (500+). Engagement revealed some indication that the lack of a major theatre may be a gap in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake Feasibility Analysis to further explore potential demand and viability.
Regional Class B Facilities					
Ice arenas	T2	4 (sheets)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peak time utilization is near capacity. Opportunities exist to increase utilization during non-peak hours (0-44% capacity). Benchmarking does not show a deficiency relative to other regions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake required investment to sustain arenas for the short to medium term. When replacement is required, a multi-sheet facility approach is suggested.
Curling facilities	T4	12 (sheets)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current facilities receive relatively strong levels of use but are not at capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake required investment to sustain arenas for the short to medium term. Only consider the development of a new facility if it can serve a regional market and replace multiple venues.
Major sport field complexes	T4 (ball diamonds) T5 (soccer / football / rugby fields)	1 soccer (site) 2 ball (sites)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of St. Paul ball diamonds are booked to capacity during peak months and hours (May-June evenings). Engagement suggests a high level of satisfaction with sport fields in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake required investment to sustain current facilities.
Field houses facilities	T1 (Indoor track) T1 (Fitness facility) T1 (gymnasium spaces) T2 (multi-sport surface)	0		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement and research identified that a field house may be a potential facility gap. Recent field house projects in the broader region have exposed residents and groups to this type of amenity. The development of multi-purpose spaces is a key trend in recreation facility development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake feasibility analysis to explore the viability of an indoor field house facility project for the medium term (5-10 years). Consider the following amenities: multi-purpose indoor space (for soccer, court sports, spontaneous use), indoor walking track, fitness centre, program rooms.
Large community hall and social gathering spaces (>500)	T3 (program spaces) T4 (event facilities) T5 (social/banquet spaces)	2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and engagement does not suggest that a gap exists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake required investment to sustain current facilities.

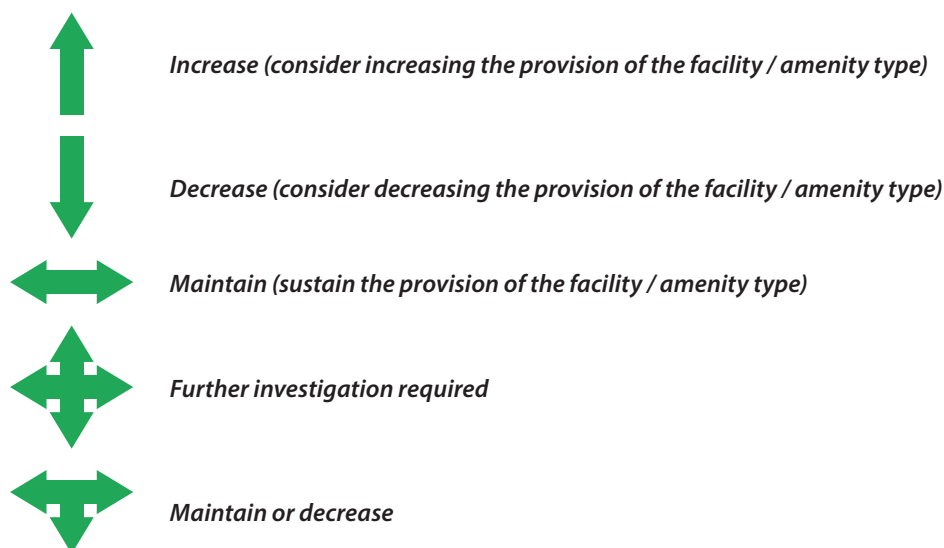
Facility / Amenity Type	Preliminary Infrastructure Priority Rank*	Current Supply (#)	Recommended Future Level of Provision (#)**	Additional Research and Engagement Considerations	Suggested Approach to Future Capital Investment
Destination skateboard / BMX facilities	T3 (BMX) T4 (skateboard parks)	1*		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skateboard and BMX facilities are an emerging trend. Engagement revealed that spontaneous use spaces for youth may be a gap. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work regionally to investigate the benefits of developing a regional destination facility vs focusing investment locally.
Major campgrounds and day use areas				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available data reflects that campgrounds are well utilized by local and non-local residents. Engagement findings revealed a high level of value and demand for campground and day use spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain current campgrounds and investigate opportunities for enhancement (e.g. more serviced stalls, larger stalls that can accommodate larger units, enhancement to day use areas).
Major agricultural grounds				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The region continues to host a number of longstanding annual events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake required investment to sustain current facilities.

**Based on the engagement inputs. See pages 24 and 25 for the complete ranking.*

**The Allied Arts Centre can accommodate performances for up to 500 people and serves as a regional performing arts venue but it does not have fixed theatre/bowl seating.*

**There is a skate park in the Town of St. Paul and a new one currently being developed however it is not certain that either will act as a destination (or regional) facility*

**



It is important to reiterate that the suggested level of future provision will require ongoing analysis and is dependent upon the partner municipalities undertaking adequate lifecycle budgeting. Should major re-investment or replacement be required for a major facility (e.g. ice arena, curling rink, aquatics centre), further analysis will be required to determine the viability of sustaining the current level of provision. The following Capital Investment Framework is provided to assist with this analysis and decision making.

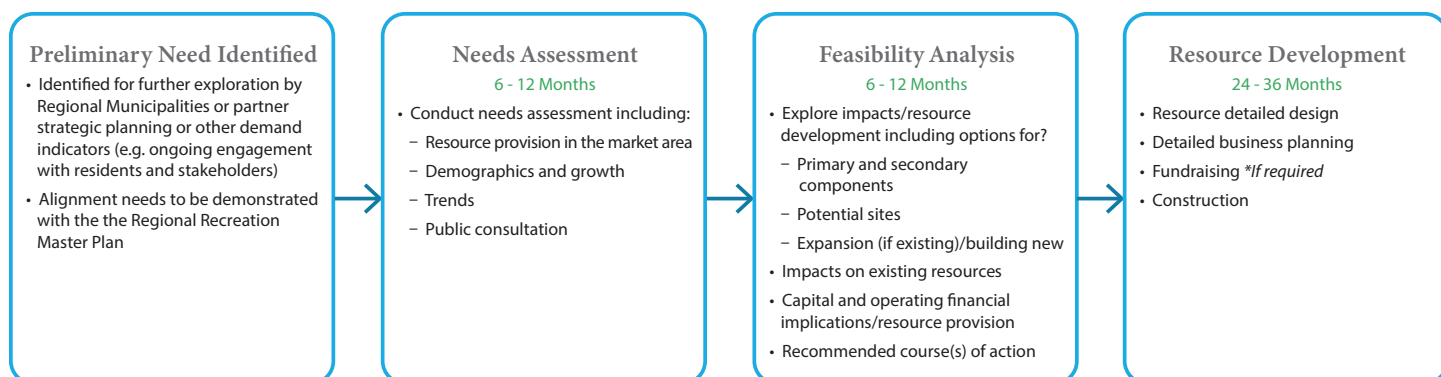
Community Level Facility and Amenity Strategies

In addition to the amenity strategies that are recommended on a regional basis, opportunities also exist to enhance recreation places and spaces that are provided locally by each of the partner municipalities. Identified in the following chart are suggested enhancement strategies for potential local implementation:

Suggested Community Level Facility and Amenity Strategy	Rationale
Prioritize making optimal use of existing spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities in the region have made a significant investment in recreation infrastructure. Making use of existing spaces may help alleviate some need for future development or expansion. Further animating spaces can help improve perceptions of use and community value.
Focus on animating parks and other casual outdoor spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The engagement findings revealed a high level of use, and value for, parks and outdoor spaces in the region. These spaces provide important and affordable space for passive recreation. Trends suggest that individuals place a high value on parks and outdoor spaces, and that these spaces contribute to community vibrancy and quality of life.
Ensure that future capital investment into recreation facilities balances needs for both structured and spontaneous use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The engagement findings revealed that some residents and stakeholders believe that preference has been given to organized sport. The engagement findings revealed strong level of participation and use of spontaneous / unstructured use amenities and spaces (e.g. parks, trails, public swim). Trends suggest an increasing demand for unstructured and spontaneous use spaces.
Ensure that sufficient funds are allocated to a capital reserve. <i>*Ideally 1-2% of a facilities replacement value should be allocated to a capital reserve fund.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local municipalities in the region are directly or indirectly responsible for a significant asset base of facilities. As these facilities age, re-investment will be required.

Recommended Capital Investment Framework

When major capital investment into existing or new regional recreation infrastructure is being contemplated (>\$500,000), it is suggested that the following Framework be employed. Utilizing this Framework will help ensure maximum transparency and measure the need for, viability and impacts of the potential project. This approach should apply to municipal projects as well as those proposed by non-profit or private groups accessing public funding.



9. Implementation








This Master Plan outlines a number of recommendations to strengthen the recreation delivery system in the region and make public recreation more beneficial to all. Most of the recommendations can be implemented by regional municipalities independently, thereby improving recreation in each community, however a regional approach has also been proposed where regional municipalities can work together in providing certain aspects of recreation. The following table summarizes Plan recommendations, explains how each could be implemented and outlines potential timing and financial impacts.

Recommendation	Timing	Financial Impact*	Independent Implementation	Regional Implementation
Strategy #1: Enhance the capacity building support provided to volunteers and community organizations.	Short term – ongoing	\$\$	✓	✓
Strategy #2: Enhance the promotions and marketing of recreation (and related) opportunities in the region.	Short term – ongoing	\$\$	✓	✓
Strategy #3: Ensure clarity and / or consistency regarding the grant funding processes and decision making.	Mid term – ongoing	\$	✓	✓
Strategy #4: Provide additional training and development opportunities.	Mid term – ongoing	\$	✓	✓
Strategy #5: Undertake a Needs Assessment every 5 years to track progress and update the Master Plan.	Mid term – ongoing	\$\$\$	✓	✓
Strategy #6: Develop a regional financial assistance program to ensure inclusion and access to recreation programs and opportunities.	Mid term – ongoing	\$\$\$	✓	✓
Strategy #7: Improve the collection and analysis of utilization data.	Short term - ongoing	\$\$	✓	✓

*Financial impacts indicated as follows: \$\$\$\$ = >\$100,000; \$\$\$ = \$50,000-\$100,000; \$\$ = \$25,000-\$50,000; \$ = <\$25,000

It is also important to note that there are specific directions outlined in the Plan for potential regional recreation amenities (indoor pools, arenas, etc.) as well as a prescribed planning process to follow for any infrastructure investment over \$500,000 to help guide future planning and decision making.

In order to implement the recommendations outlined from a regional perspective, there are certain next steps that would need to occur. The following explains.

Recommended Next Steps	Potential Timing
1. Council endorsement / acceptance the Master Plan (all 4 Councils).	 Fall, 2019
2. Creation of a Regional body with administrative support (terms of reference for each level) including 4 partner municipalities and other recreation service delivery agents such as agricultural societies if deemed relevant.	 Spring, 2019 / 2020
3. Regional body defines regional assets (starting with ideas outlined in the Master Plan). Considering the criteria outlined herein such as quantity in the region, capital and operating cost structure, utilization patterns, etc.	 Spring, 2019 / 2020
4. Regional body determines responsibility sharing approach and sharing model (flow of resources and decision making will be between all municipalities). Considering the criteria outlined herein such as balancing population served and assessment values, benefitting market area as opposed to utilization patterns, acknowledging local "host" communities receive more benefit, etc.	 Spring, 2019 / 2020
5. Regional body and independent municipalities tackle other plan strategies (as prioritized by each periodically) such as regional promotions and marketing efforts, consistent policy development, standardized granting procedures, etc.	 Summer, 2019 and on
6. Regional body reports on Plan progress annually to each Council.	 Annually (beginning in Winter, 2020)
7. Independent municipalities use Regional body as a sounding board / filter for all decision making related to agreed to regional assets and services (so that all regional projects are contemplated in the same way, through a regional perspective).	 Ongoing as needed

The region now has a road map for improving recreation, regardless of how municipalities decide to collaborate. The recommendations herein are meant to strengthen and bolster the benefits in the region from investment in recreation. Residents and visitors of the area will be better off as Plan implementation occurs.

A Feasibility Triggers

While the amenity strategies presented in this Plan identify a road map for future development, it is important to note that circumstances evolve and will require continuous assessment. As such, the decision-making triggers identified below should be monitored and used to further vet the projects identified as decision-making needs to occur. It is critical that formal feasibility analysis take place for capital projects estimated to cost over \$500,000. If two or more of the following triggers are met, it is recommended to start the feasibility analysis.

1. Facility spaces currently being offered approach 80% to 90% utilization on a sustained basis.
2. The cost to repair a facility costs 50% or more of the cost to replace.
3. Trends and market assessment support that future demands for the facility type will remain stable or increase.
4. The facility in question and program services proposed provide equitable access for all residents as a public service.
5. The facility type and function aligns with regional strategic planning, broader planning initiatives (ARPA, CPRA, Government of Alberta, etc.), and the goals and outcomes outlined in this Master Plan.
6. Facility type and function are not currently or adequately provided through other agencies or private sector services in regional municipalities.
7. Potential or confirmed operational/capital partners are committed and established as registered societies, institutions, or municipal governments and collectively represent sufficient membership or market segments to sustain use of the development for the life of the project.
8. An external partner (institution, municipality, volunteer and/or non-profit group) leading a facility development initiative has, or has access to, significant capital and/or operating resources.

As feasibility analysis requires public investment, the following general guidelines for feasibility exploration should be achieved. General conditions for prudent feasibility analysis include the following:

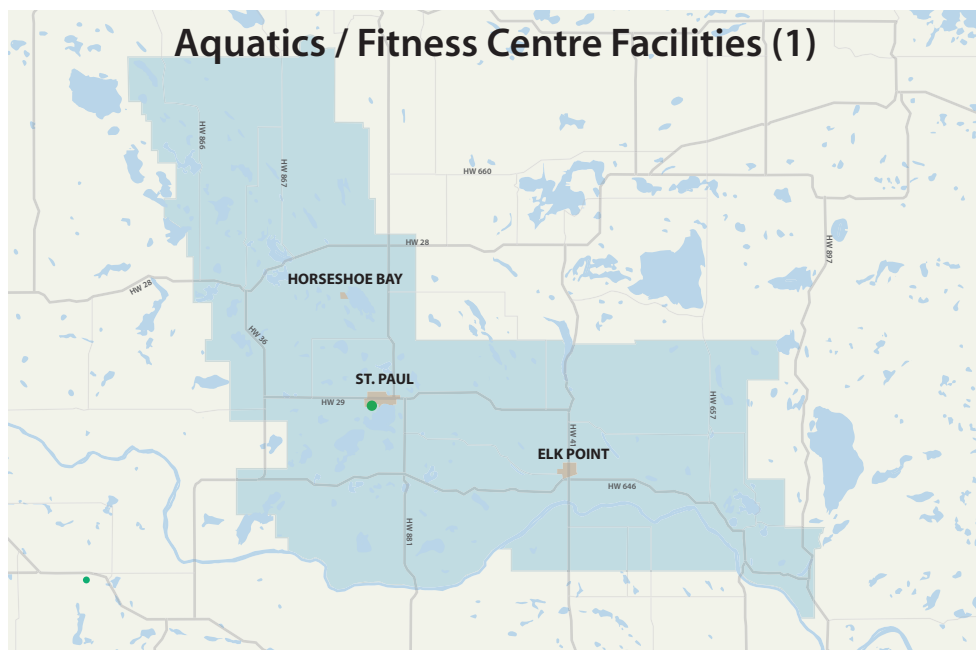
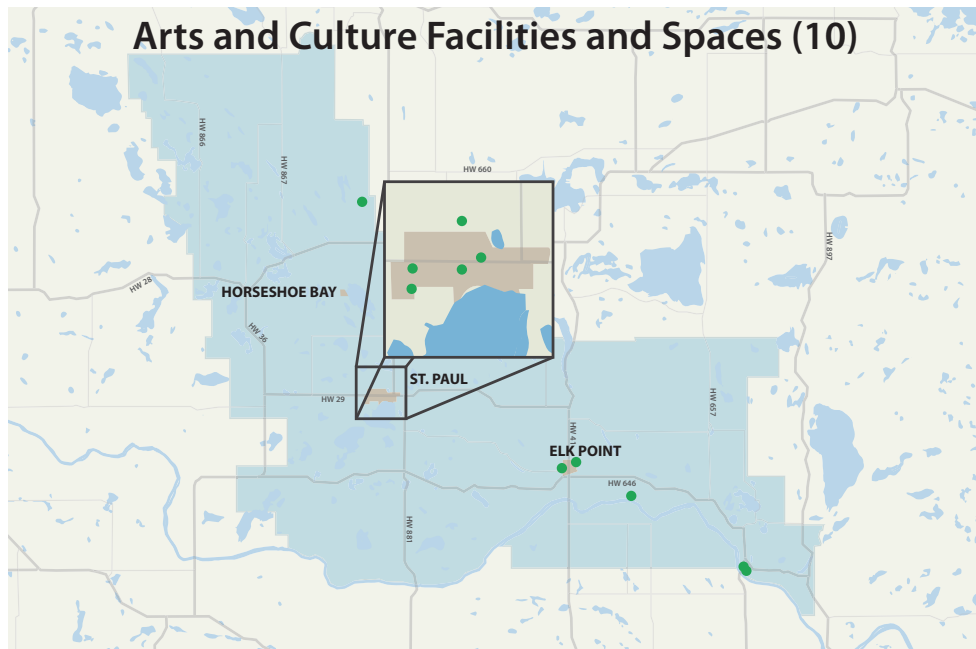
- There must be public engagement in the planning process, preferably through the use of statistically reliable surveys.
- A market assessment for component service delivery functions must be completed.
- A thorough and transparent site/location analysis must be completed.
- There must be a concept development plan including infrastructure planning, costs and impacts of ongoing operations.
- The project must demonstrate conformance to the municipal strategic planning.
- Business planning outlining capital partners, operating partners, sources of capital, capital amortization and projection of operating costs must be completed.
- Opportunity cost analysis must be undertaken to demonstrate that the project represents the best way of achieving the intended goal.

Should feasibility analysis be warranted, these guidelines will ensure that decision makers have undertaken the required due diligence to make informed decisions in the best interest of the community and public good.

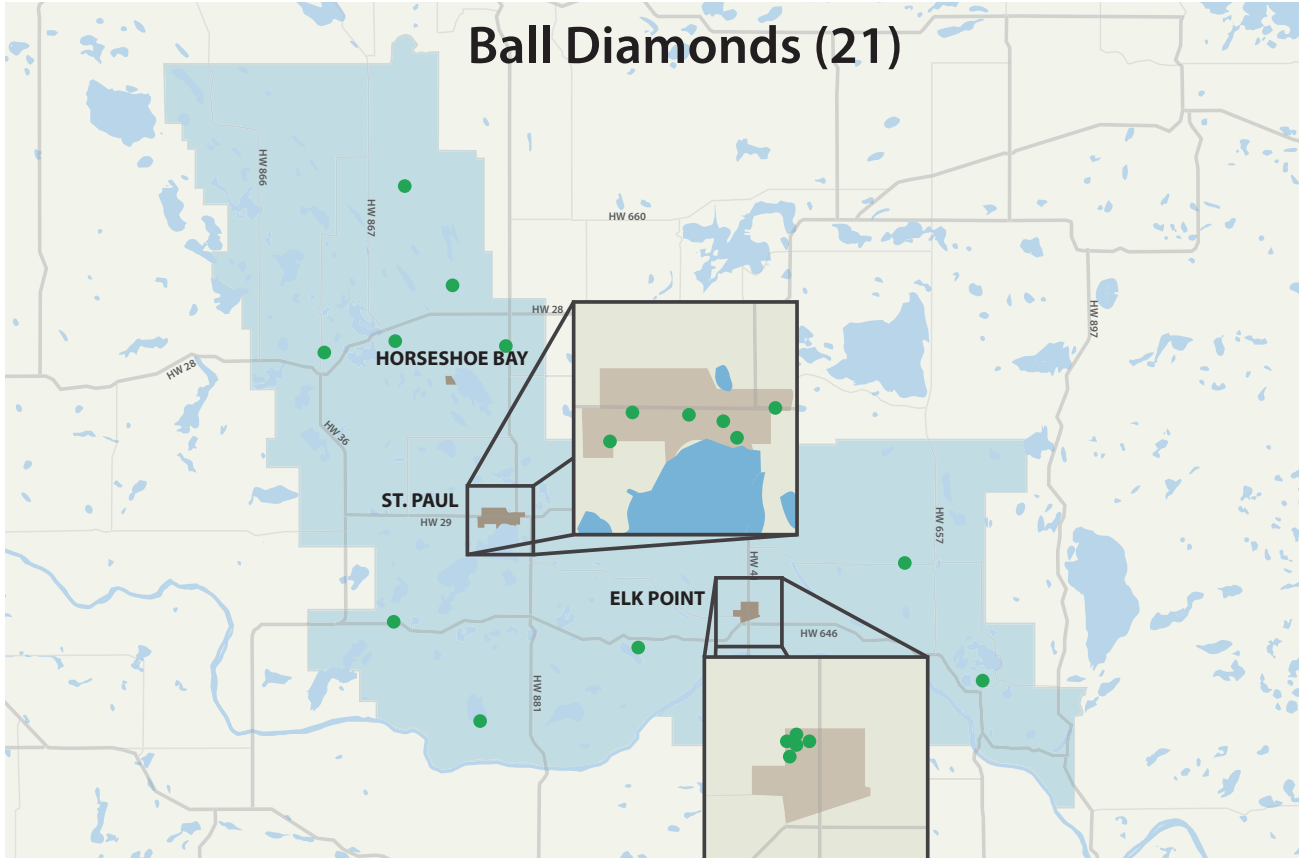
B Mapping

Mapping Recreation Infrastructure in the Region

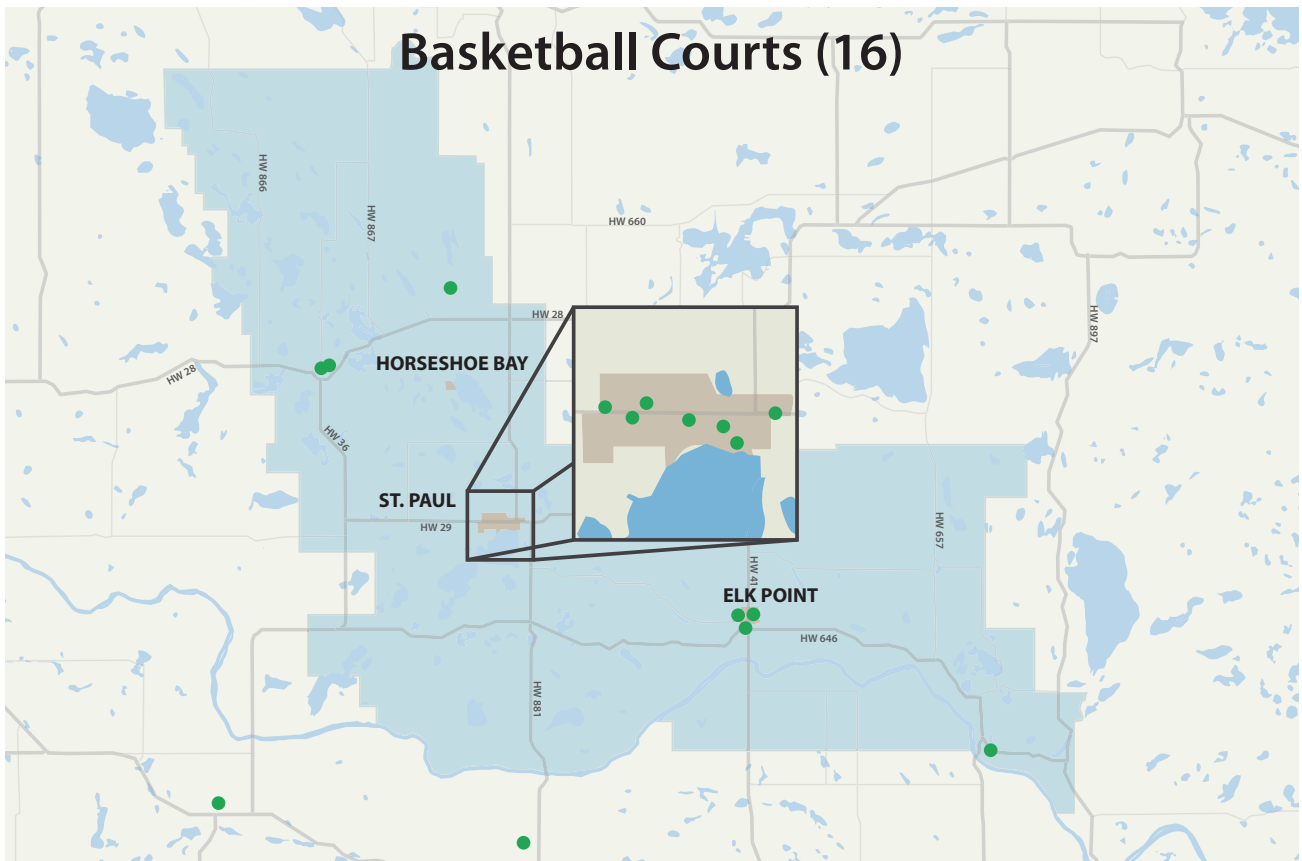
The following maps illustrate the location of recreation infrastructure in the St. Paul – Elk Point region. As reflected in the maps, the majority of facilities are concentrated in the communities of St. Paul and Elk Point.



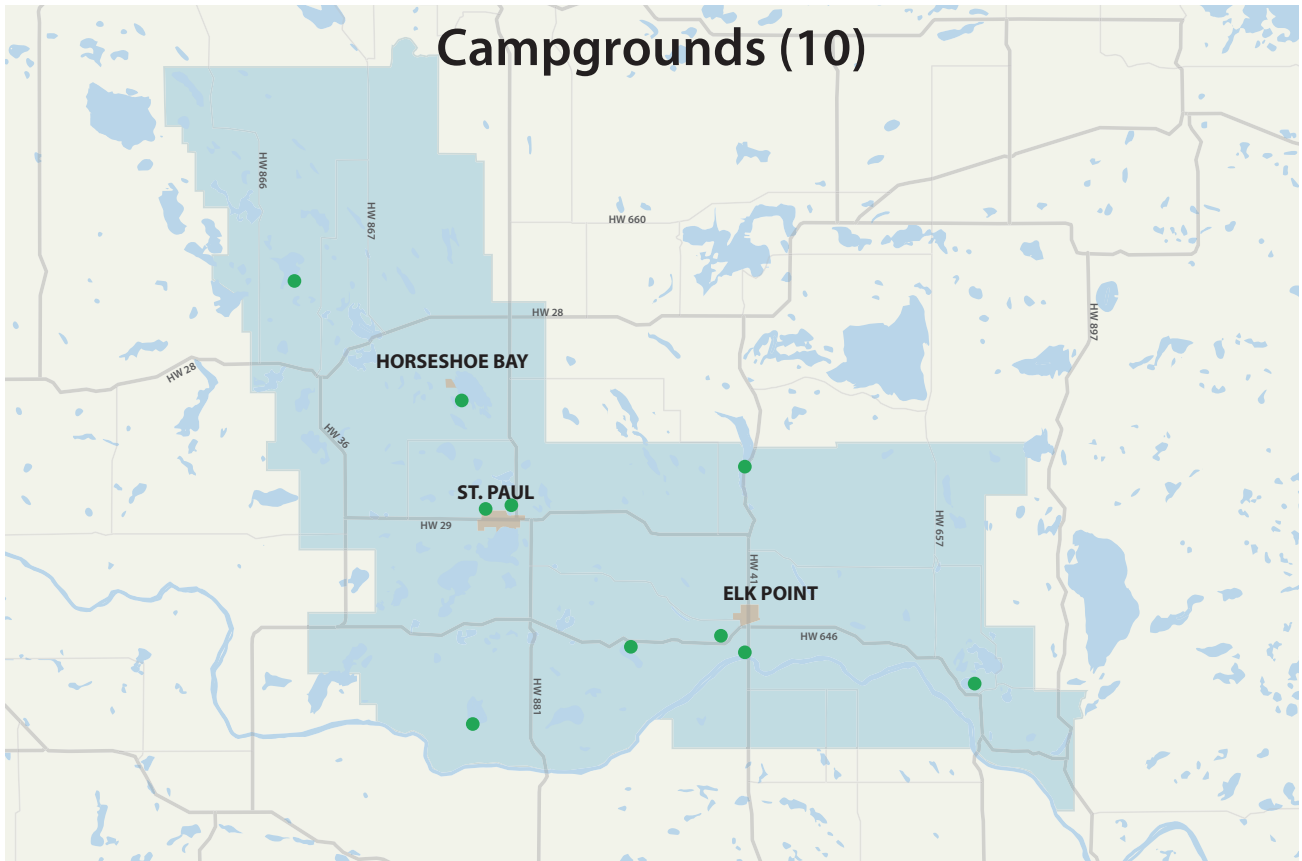
Ball Diamonds (21)



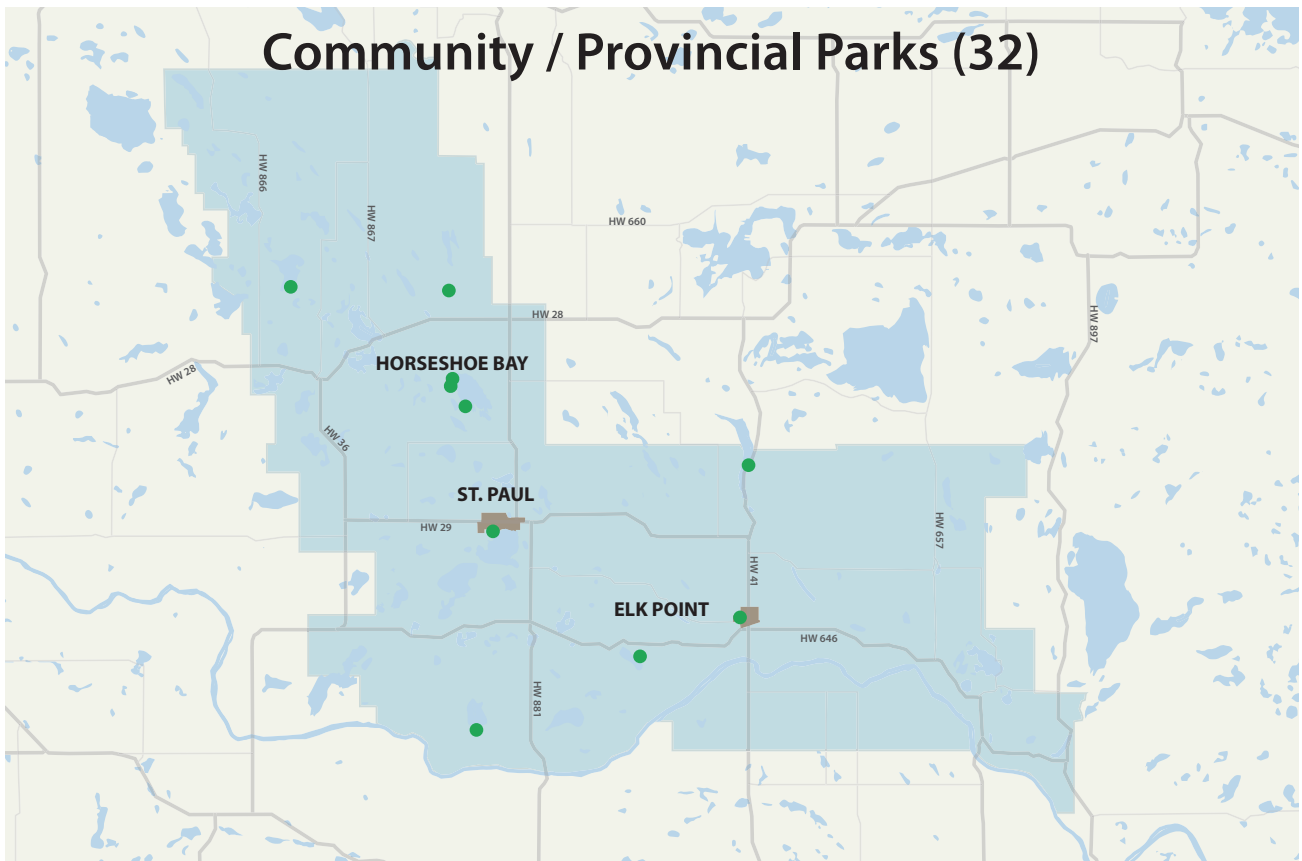
Basketball Courts (16)



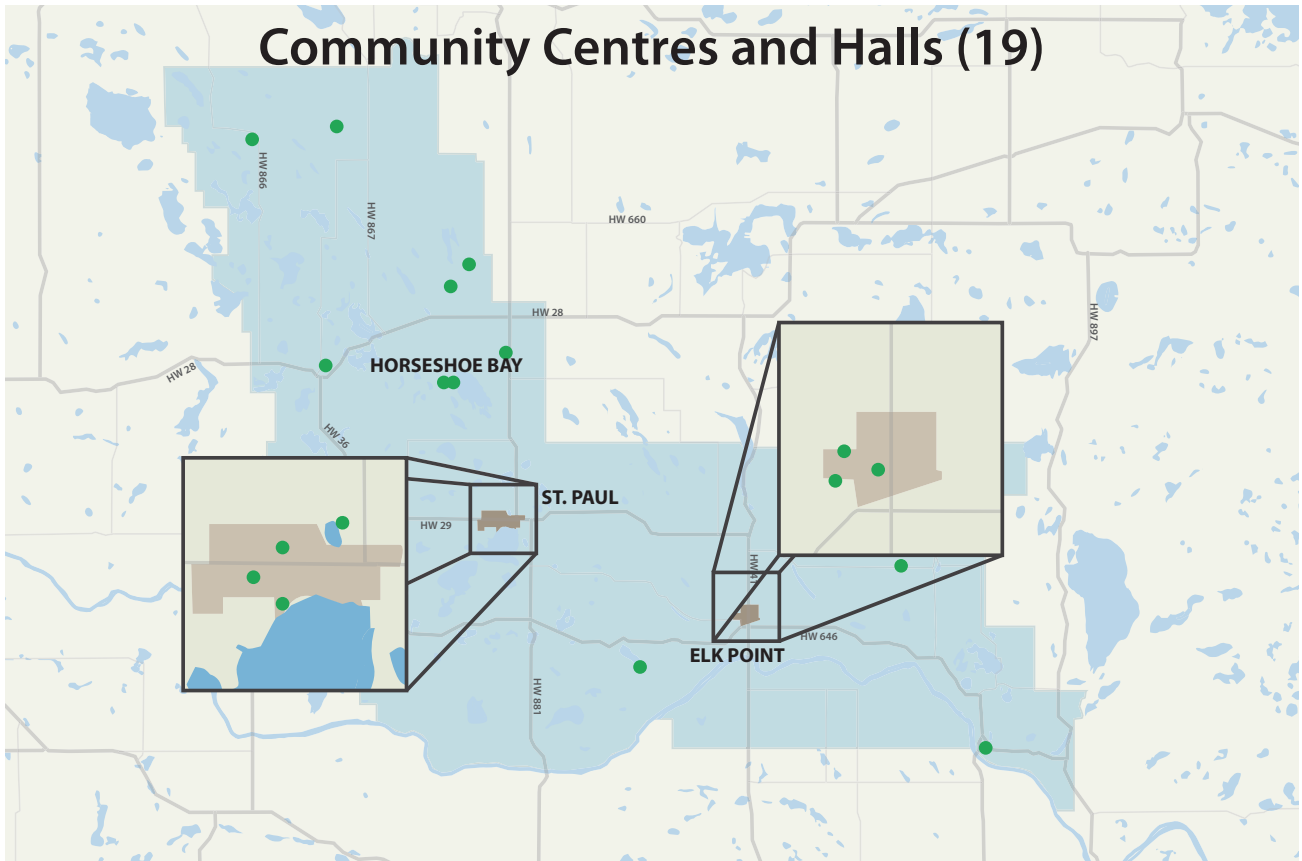
Campgrounds (10)



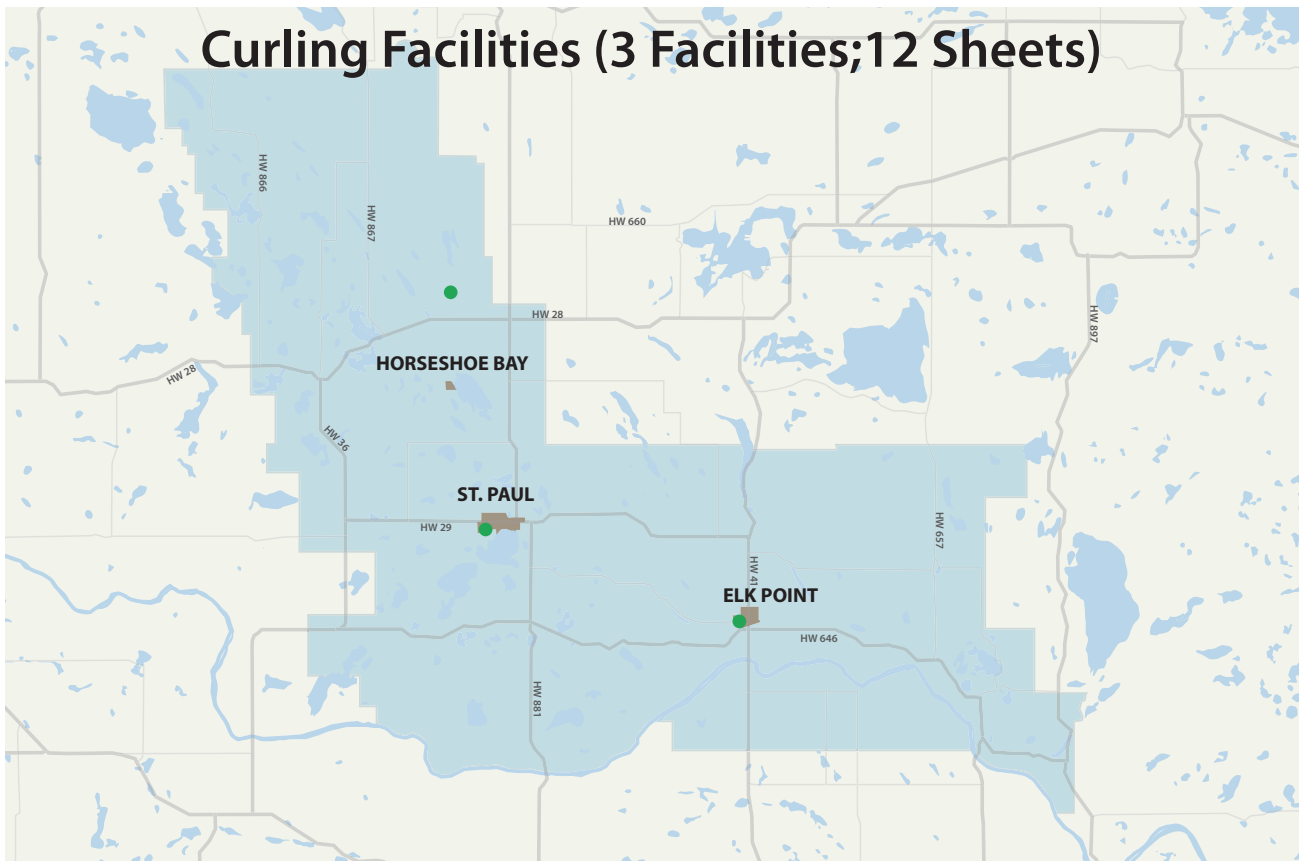
Community / Provincial Parks (32)



Community Centres and Halls (19)



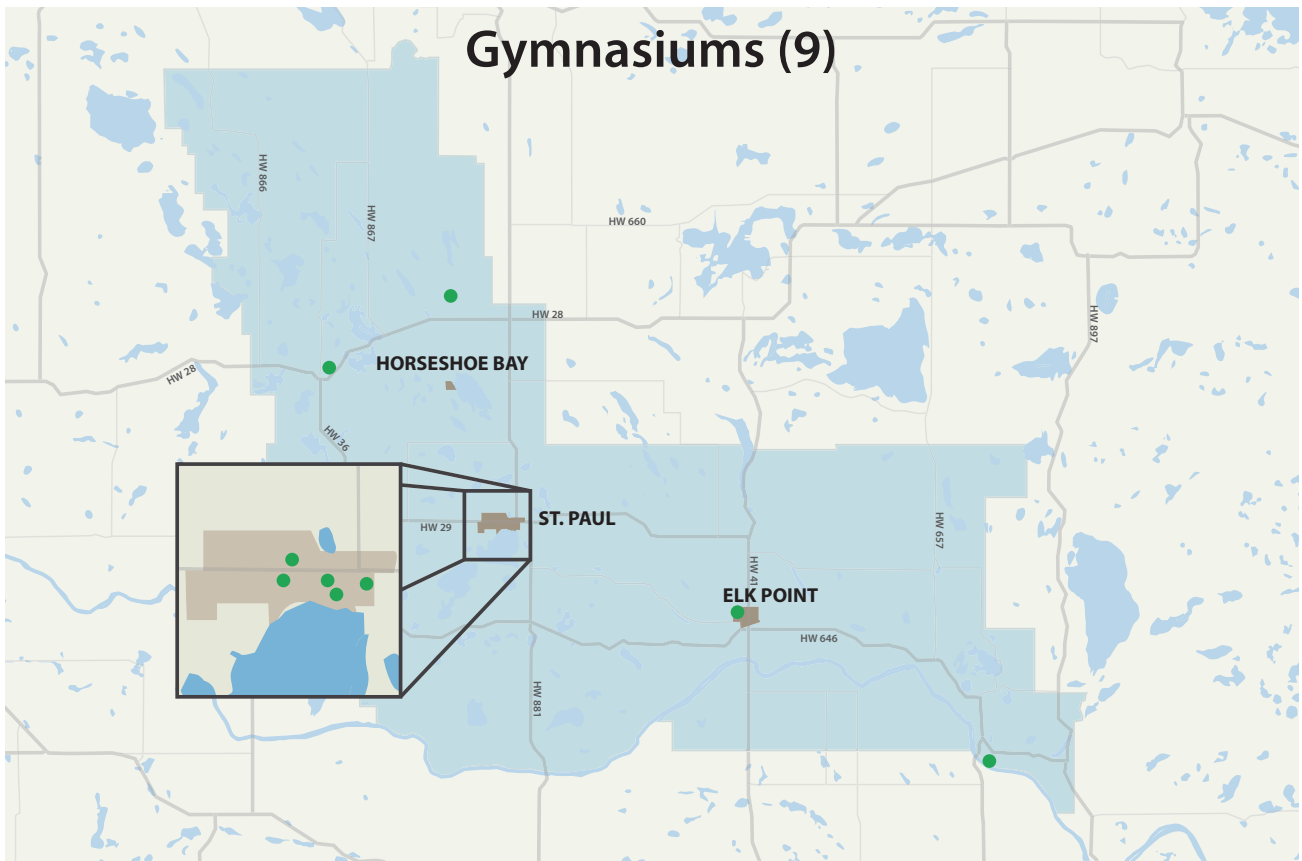
Curling Facilities (3 Facilities; 12 Sheets)



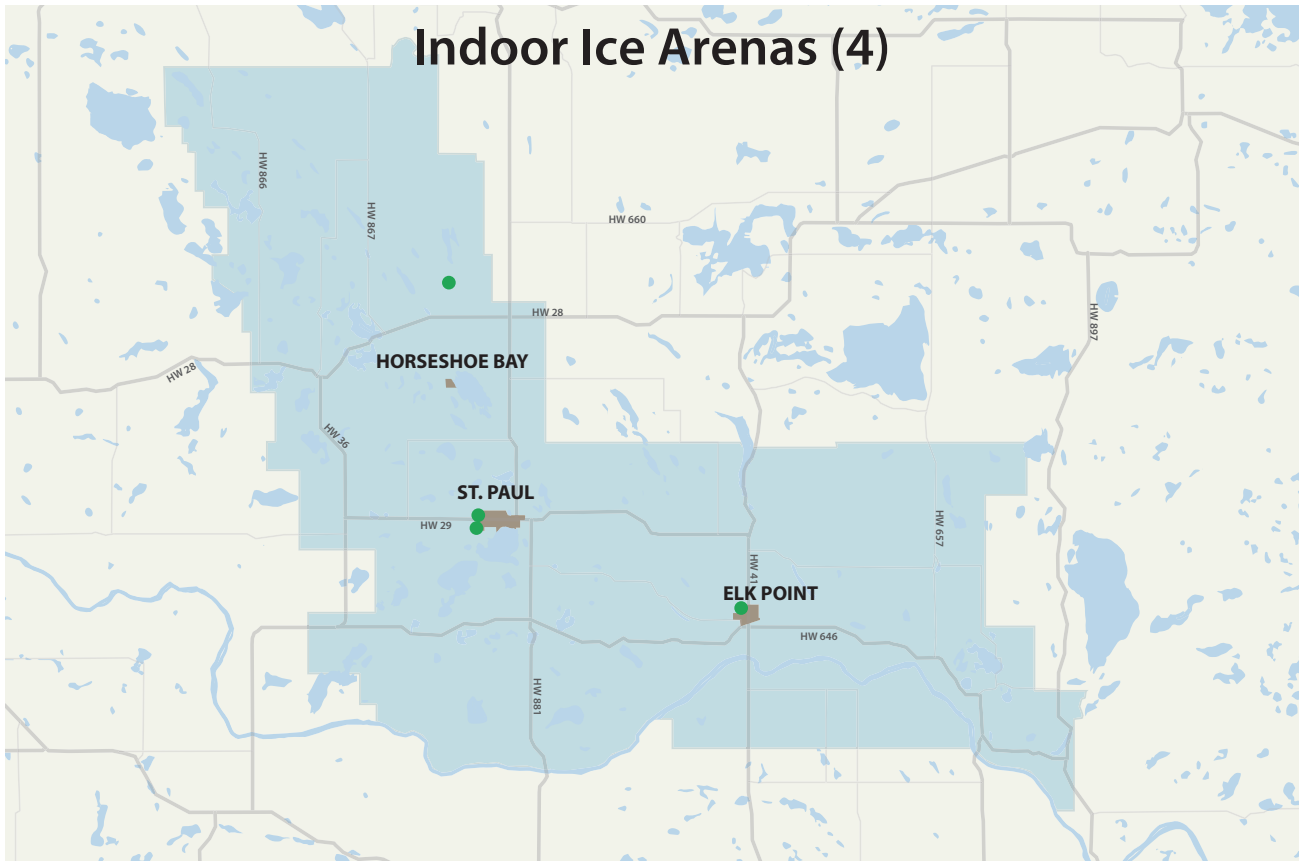
Golf Courses (3)



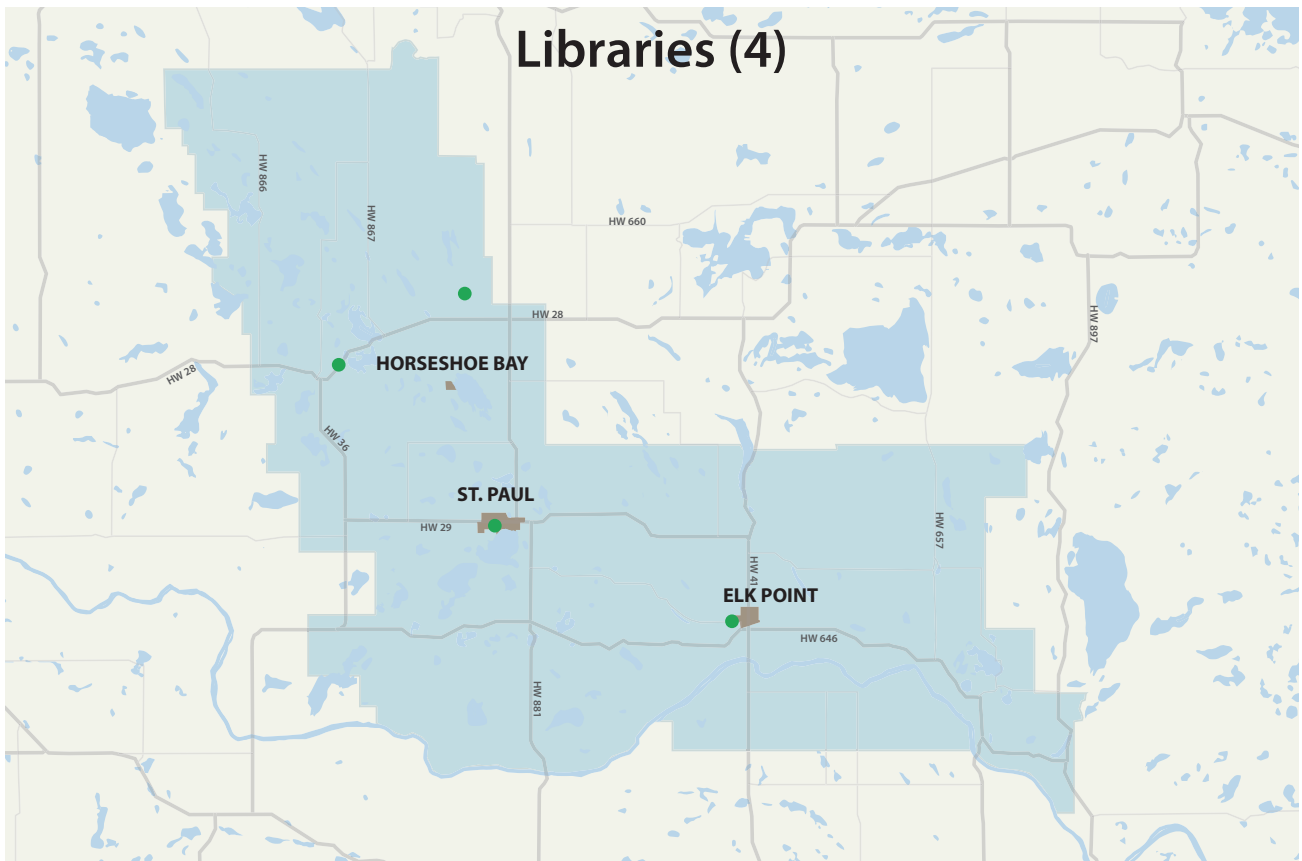
Gymnasiums (9)



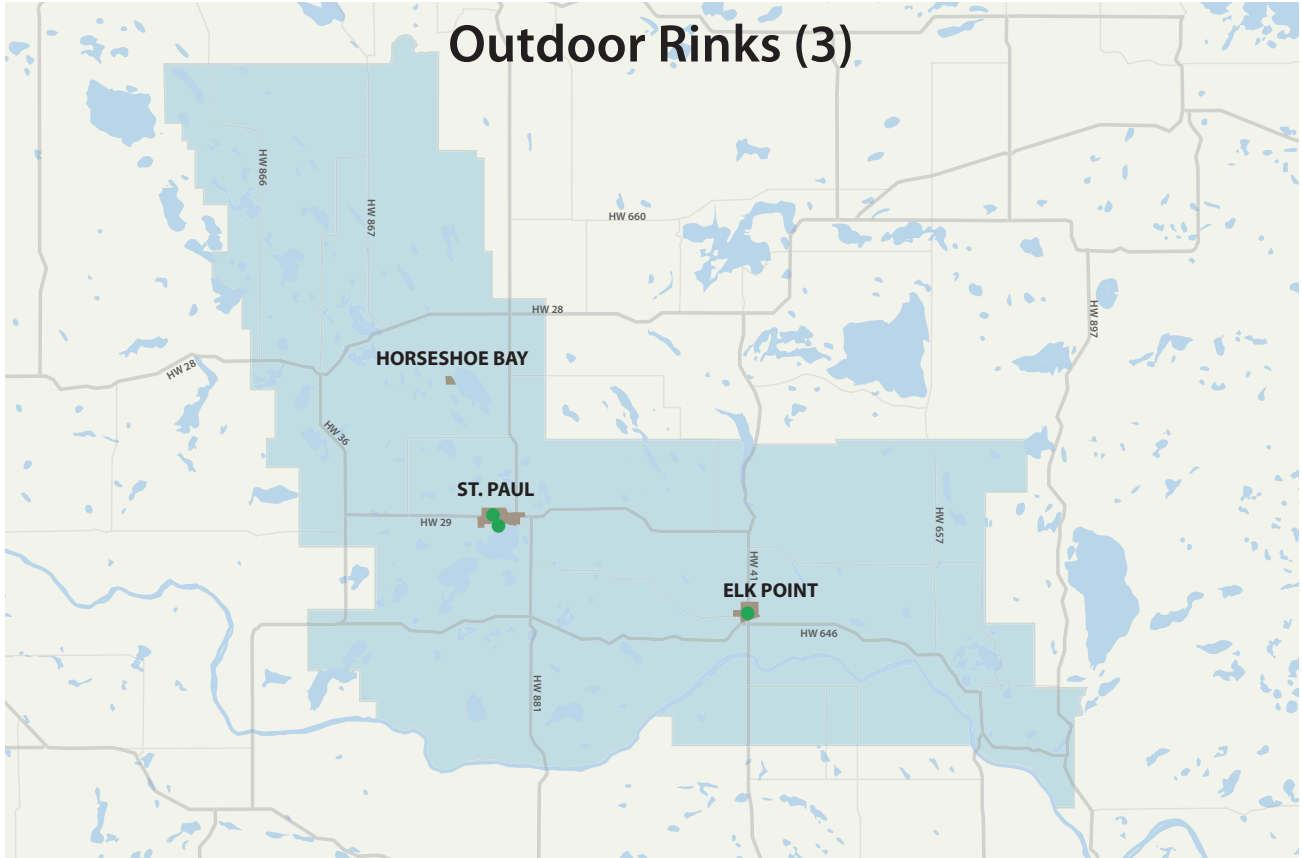
Indoor Ice Arenas (4)



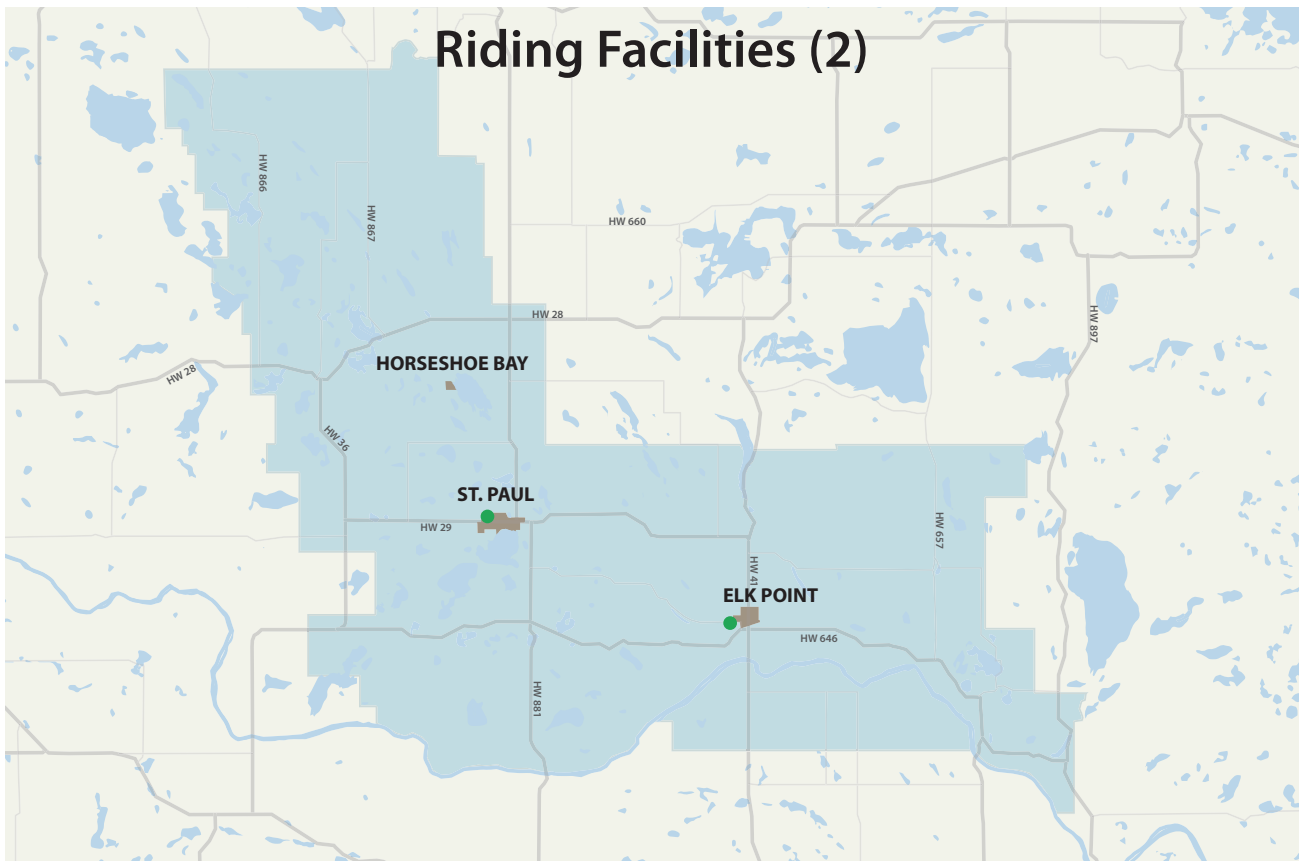
Libraries (4)



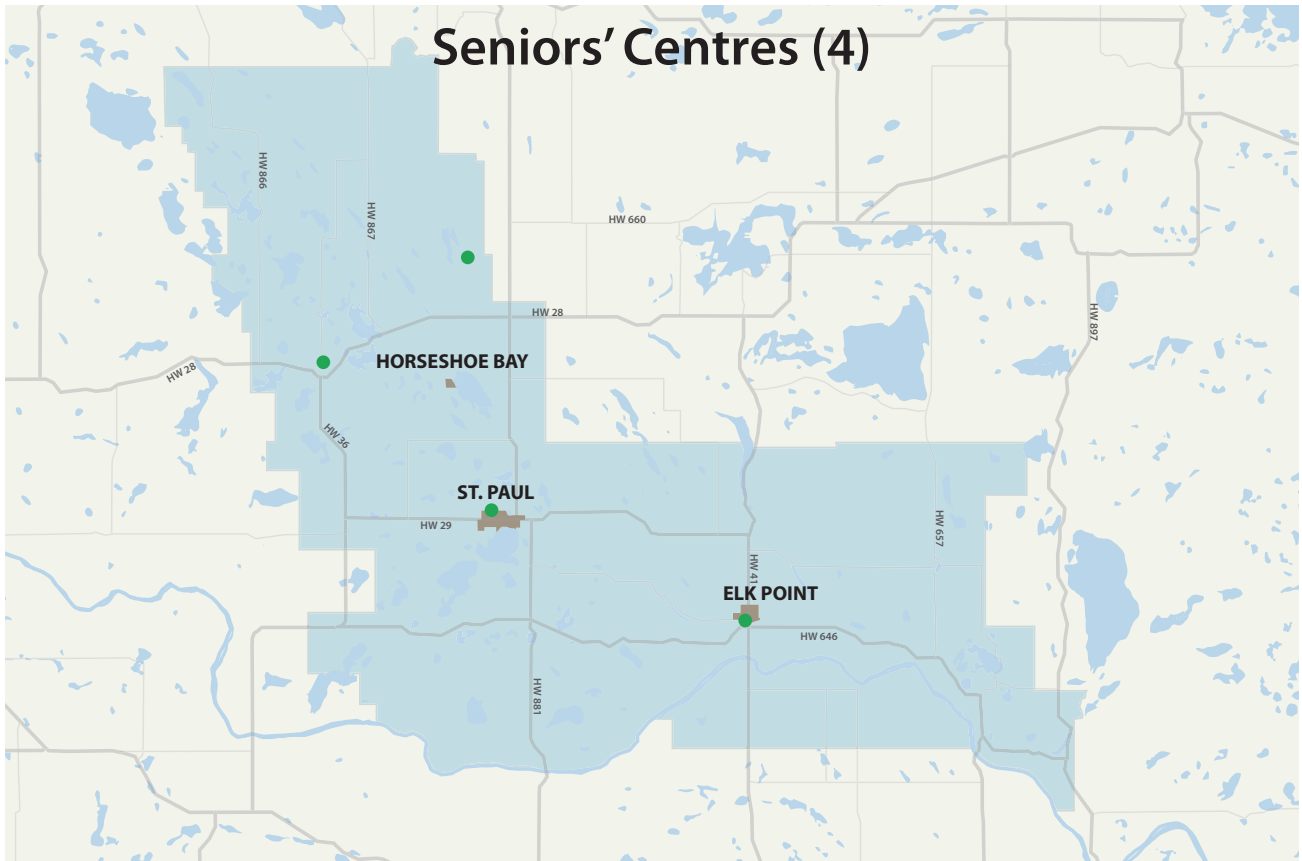
Outdoor Rinks (3)



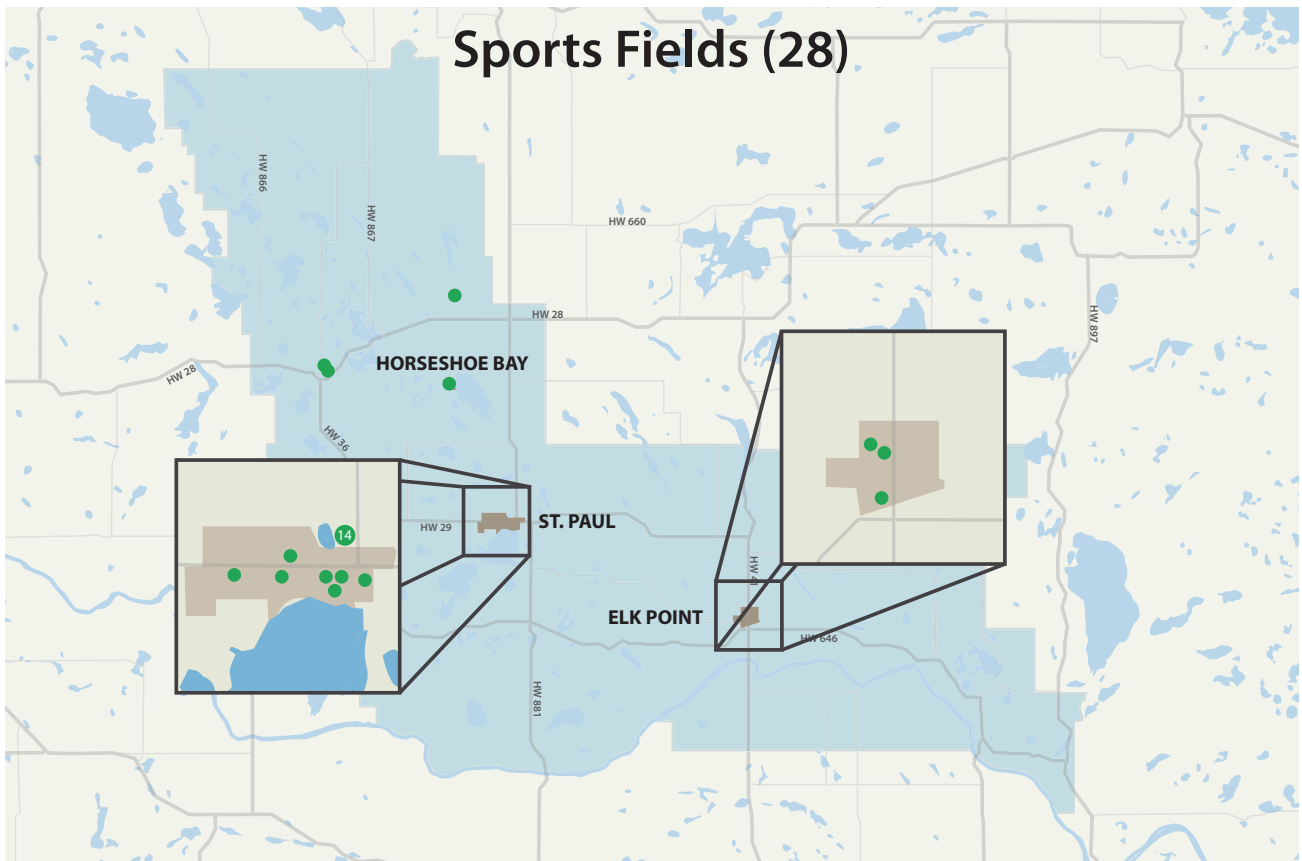
Riding Facilities (2)



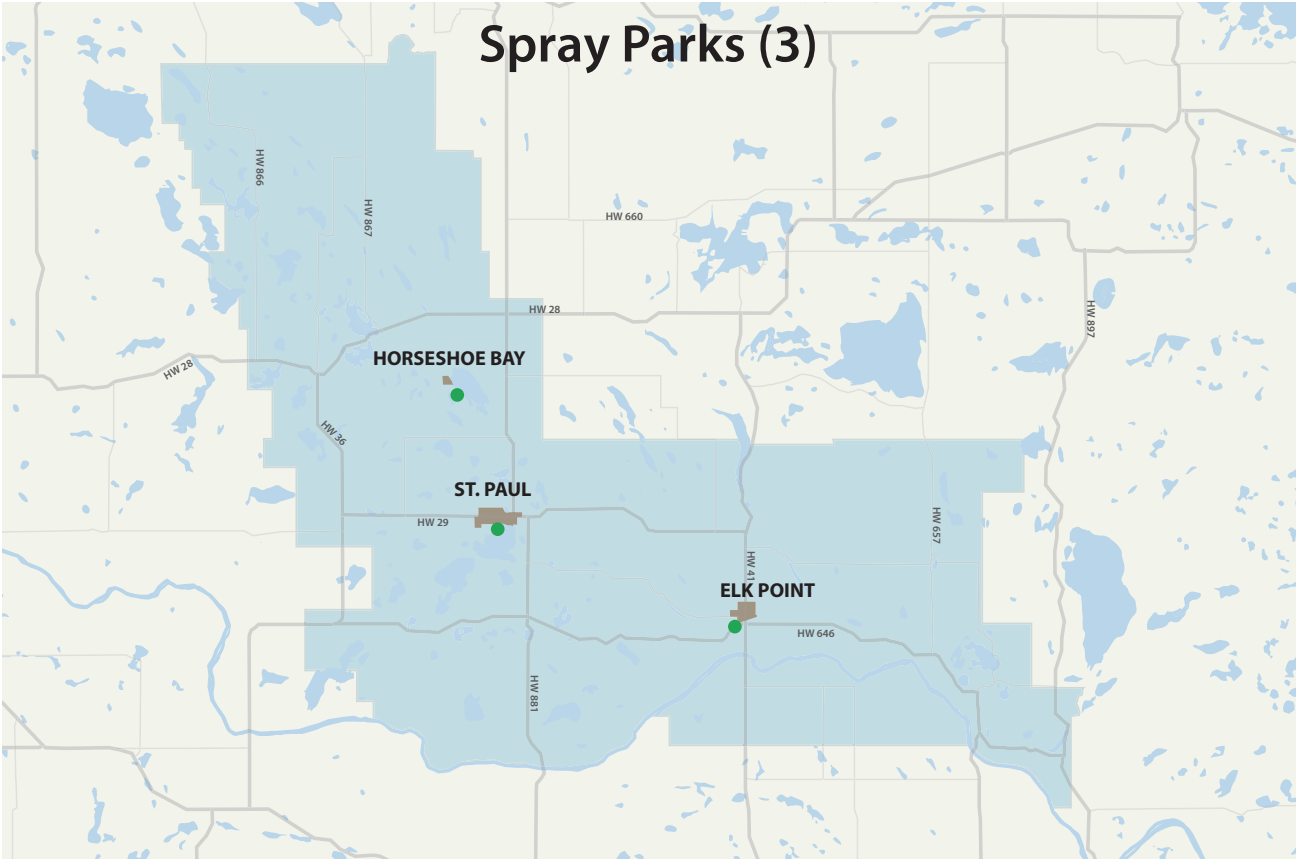
Seniors' Centres (4)



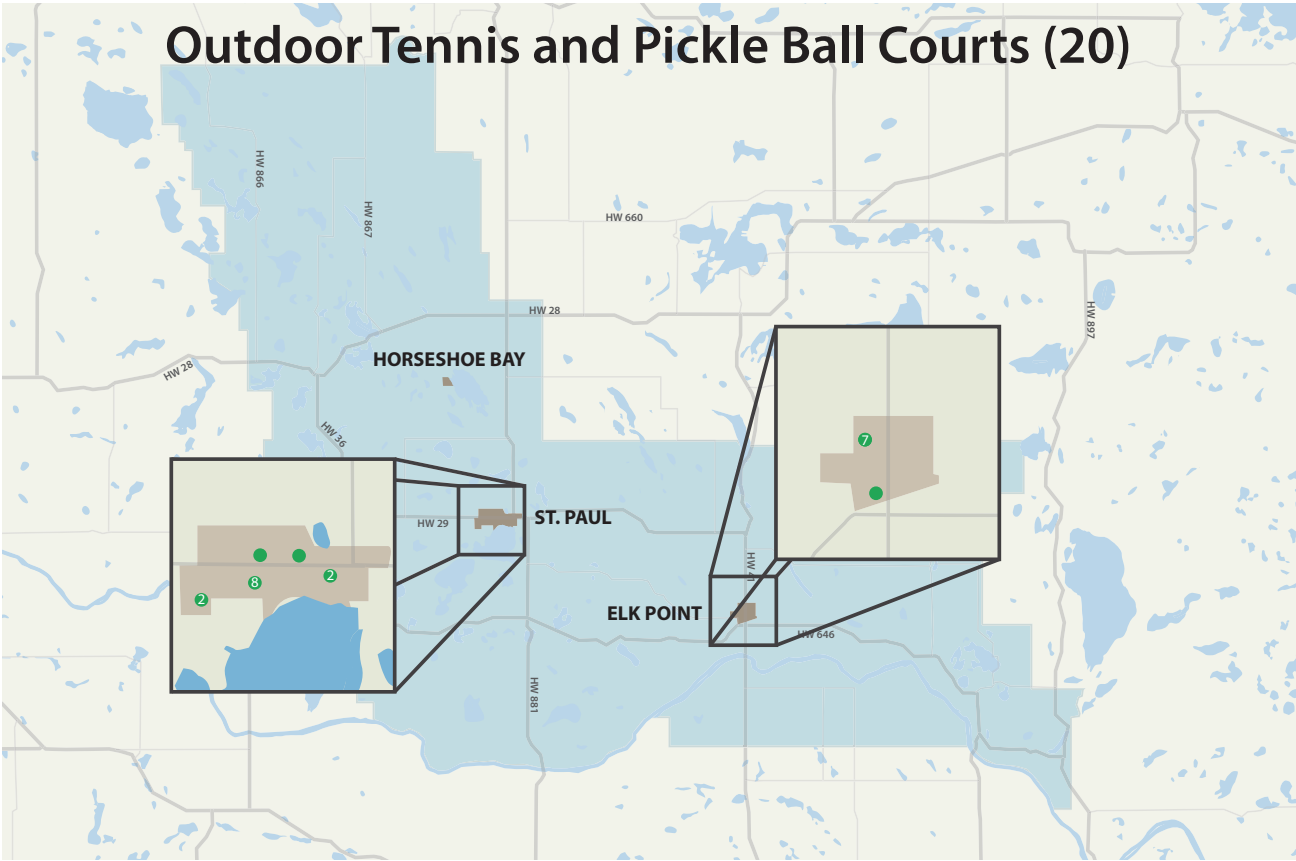
Sports Fields (28)



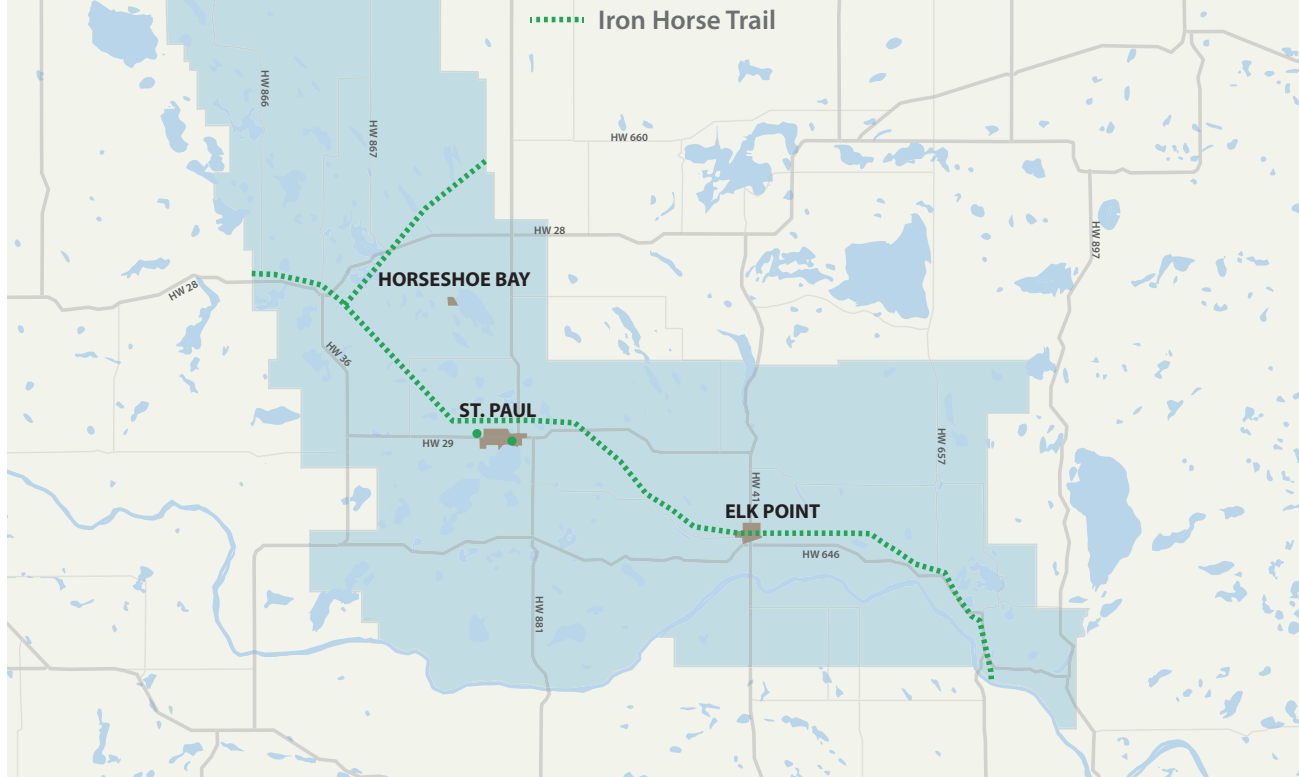
Spray Parks (3)



Outdoor Tennis and Pickle Ball Courts (20)



Trails and Other Natural Areas (many)



Other Amenities / Facilities

