

Request for Decision

Title	2022 Open Space Capital Projects
Proposed Motion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Council approve the proposed 2022 Open Space Capital Project List not to exceed the \$1,573,825 budget allocated for Open Space. 2. That Council authorize the Mayor to send a letter to the Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks in support of developing an equestrian staging site at the Redwater Sandhills Recreation Area and direct Administration to forward the same letter to Administration at the Ministry.
Administrative Recommendation	<p>Administration recommends that Council approve the proposed 2022 Open Space Project List as presented in Attachment 1.</p> <p>Further, Administration recommends that the Mayor send a letter to the Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks supporting the development of an equestrian staging site at the Redwater Sandhills Recreation Area and direct Administration to forward the same letter to Administration at the Ministry. Funds to encourage expediting the provincial timeline had been allocated in the 2021 budget.</p>
Previous Council / Committee Direction	<p><u>May 6, 2022 Capital Committee Meeting</u> Motion 006/22: That the Committee recommend Council approval of the 2022 Open Space Capital Project List as provided in Attachment 1.</p> <p><u>April 12, 2022 Regular Council Meeting</u> Motion 148/22: That Council accept the Open Space Plan (2022) Review and Update as an appendix document to the Open Space Plan (2016) and adopt four of the stated policies to be implemented over the next five years.</p> <p><u>December 14, 2021 Regular Council Meeting</u> Motion 549/21: That Council approve the proposed 2022 Operating and Capital Budget as amended by motions passed on November 30, 2021.</p> <p><u>June 8, 2021 Regular Council Meeting</u> Motion 321/21: That Council direct Administration to undertake work on the projects listed in Attachment 1, not to exceed \$500,000, funded from the Community Building Priority Reserve.</p>

Report

Background Information

- On April 12, 2022, Council approved the following policies and principles to be used for prioritizing projects over the next five years:
 - Sturgeon County will create development guidelines and policy that includes principles of biodiversity and low-impact development to help prioritize the protection of the natural environment;
 - Ensure there is a cross-section of open space initiatives and acquisitions that are representative of the diversity of open spaces identified in the inventory; and
 - Support the environmental conservation, protection, and enhancement of County-owned open space for present and future generations:
 - Strategic importance (Plan alignment, regulatory, safety, life-cycle maintenance, cost efficiency, and multi-year capital plan sequencing);
 - Environmental ethics;
 - Community well-being and leading practice; and
 - Contributing to a sense of place (identity, history, culture, and design).
- Based on this overall policy direction, a review of existing plans, completed studies, and public engagements undertaken in 2021, the proposed project list is deemed to be reflective of community priorities that Administration has the capacity to properly deliver to a standard of success.
- To support project success going forward, Administration is recommending improvements to processes, standards, land management practices, bylaws, and policies. This work will better position the County for future investments.
- The proposed projects for 2022 are added to those already approved and underway from 2021 and need to be considered in the context of existing resources. All future projects will be assessed using the open space capital planning evaluation matrix.
- The future Open Spaces Capital Plan will also be included in the 2023-2025 budget process that will require Council's input and direction, possible public engagement, assessment of existing approved Plans, and evaluation tools. One notable project that will be added to the list for consideration is the Casa Vista pedestrian bridge, which was discussed during the May 6, 2022 Capital Planning Committee meeting.
- Depending on Council's direction for additional engagement, engineering support, and further feasibility work relating to the projects

	<p>in Attachment 1, Administration will review and identify related resource requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Redwater Sandhills Recreation Area</u>: Work continues to advance projects from the 2021 budget including collaborating with Alberta Environment and Parks and the Alberta Trail Riding Association (ATRA) to develop an equestrian staging area at the Redwater Sandhills Recreation Area. Council approved up to \$100,000 for both Opal and Redwater initiatives in 2021. Alberta Parks administration has stated that the Province approved \$30,000 in the 2023 budget to undertake the detailed planning and design for a staging area. Depending on the final project scope, it could be considered in the 2024-2025 capital budget. Provincial staff have indicated that projects may be expedited if a municipality would like to partner, often through a financial contribution or incentive. It was recommended that a letter from Sturgeon County be sent to the Minister of Environment and Parks supporting the equestrian staging area project by offering a financial contribution. <p><u>External Communication</u> Administration is preparing a webpage dedicated to Open Space Planning and Development, including a section describing existing and upcoming projects and improvements. The project list will be added to the website with contact information to support the communication of proposed work and related engagements to the community.</p> <p><u>Relevant Policy/Legislation/Practices</u> The Open Spaces Plan is a non-statutory plan. The Municipal Development Plan states under RG 1.3: <i>Developing and adopting Management Plans, Master Plan and Strategies that align with the vision and direction of the MDP and Capital Region Growth Plan.</i></p>
Implication of Administrative Recommendation	<p><u>Strategic Alignment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued investment in the County’s Open Spaces promotes a vision of protecting, preserving, and promoting the County’s beautiful, natural spaces. • Responsible use of the vast amount of open space promotes community building. • 2022 investments align with 2021 decisions and will impact projects for advancement in 2023. <p>Operational Excellence – Enhancing mechanisms for land management that are consistent with legislation, master plans, policies, and procedures.</p> <p>Thriving Communities – Committing the proposed resources to this project will support the development of integrated natural spaces and trail systems, cultivating safe, beautiful, and complete communities.</p> <p>Planned Growth – Proposed projects demonstrate Sturgeon County’s commitment to fund improvements to existing assets that effect residents, advancing Council’s strategic priority of enhanced open space and recreational infrastructure.</p>

	<p>Collaborative Governance – Endorsing this project plan would reinforce Council’s commitment to ongoing regional partnerships, community consultation and engagement.</p> <p>Environmental Stewardship – Key projects will assess, identify, and sustainably manage County land and new acquisitions which highlights Council’s commitment to sustainable land management.</p> <p><u>Organizational:</u> The Open Space Program area will be expanded this year with the addition of a Director and support position to the Open Space Lead. Some support may be required from contracted services for project management and engagement.</p> <p><u>Financial:</u> The project list prioritizes and allocates the funds Council approved in its 2022 Budget of \$1,573,875 for open space. Based on Council’s previous direction, ongoing public engagement, the Open Space Plan, and technical studies, Administration is able to provide a well-defined project list for Council’s consideration based on the recommendation from the Capital Committee.</p>
Alternatives Considered	No alternatives were considered.
Implications of Alternatives	None.
Follow up Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post the project list on the County website under a new section being developed outlining Open Space Improvements (Community Services, Q2/Q3 2022). 2. Initiate process to prepare Open Space budget for the next three years for Council’s consideration (Community Services, Q2/Q3 2022).
Attachment(s)	1. Attachment 1: 2022 Open Space Project List
Report Reviewed by:	<p>Karolina Drabik, Open Space Lead, Community Services</p> <p>Scott MacDougall, Chief Operating Officer – COO</p> <p>Reegan McCullough, County Commissioner – CAO</p>

Strategic Alignment Checklist

Vision: *Offering a rich tapestry of historical, cultural, and natural experiences, Sturgeon County is a municipality that honours its rural roots and cultivates desirable communities. Uniquely situated to provide world-class agricultural, energy, and business investment opportunities, the County prioritizes responsible stewardship and dreaming big.*

Guiding Principles: Collaboration | Accountability | Flexibility | Excellence | Safety | Future Readiness | Affordability | Innovation

Community Outcome	Not consistent	Consistent	N/A
Planned Growth			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internationally competitive to attract, grow and sustain diverse businesses; tenacious focus on new growth and innovation 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern broadband and digital capabilities 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low cost, minimal red-tape regulations 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable and effective infrastructure planning; comprehensive land use and infrastructure planning 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thriving Communities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beautiful, surprising places with high standards; integrated natural spaces & trail systems; healthy and resilient 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging cultural, historical, and civic amenities; strong community identity and pride 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe, welcoming, and diverse communities; small community feel and personal connection; commitment to high quality of life 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental Stewardship			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean air, land, and water; Carbon neutral municipal practices; circular economy opportunities 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation of natural areas and agricultural lands; enhanced greening and biodiversity; safekeeping ecosystems 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable development; partnerships with industry and others to drive emission reductions 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative Governance			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predictable and stable external relationships; volunteer partnerships 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful connections with Indigenous communities 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing community consultation and engagement; transparent and action-oriented decision making based on sound rationale 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful and informed debate; clear and supportive governance processes 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operational Excellence			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged and effective people – Council, Admin and Volunteers; continuous learning and improvement mindset; nimble and bold, with strong leadership 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality cost-effective service delivery; robust procurement and operational practices and policies; asset management and performance measurement; careful debt and reserve stewardship; long-term financial planning and sustainability 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future focused thinking to proactively respond to emerging opportunities and challenges 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative revenue generation and service delivery models integrated strategic and business planning 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>