

# Strathcona County Community Halls Strategy

DRAFT

## Table of Contents

### Contents

Land Acknowledgement.....	3
Project Acknowledgements .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Background .....	4
Current State .....	5
Vision.....	8
Principles.....	8
Shared Outcomes.....	8
Achieving the Outcomes .....	9
Next Steps .....	14
Conclusion.....	14
Appendices.....	15
Appendix A: Community Halls and Seniors Centres Map .....	15
Appendix B: Definition of Community Halls and Community Hall Operators.....	16
Appendix C: Methods Informing Development of Community Hall Strategy .....	17
Appendix D: Value of Community Halls .....	18
Appendix E: Changing Social, Cultural and Recreational Context of Strathcona County .....	19

## Land Acknowledgement

Strathcona County is located on Treaty Six Territory, the homeland of the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region Two and Four. Strathcona County honors the First Peoples of this land. We recognize that we stand upon land that carries the footsteps of Cree, Métis, and Blackfoot amongst many other Nations, who have been here for thousands of years. Therefore, Strathcona County has an inherent responsibility to foster healthier relationships with First Peoples and further the Calls to Action.

The buildings discussed in this Strategy are situated on lands that have been gathering places for Indigenous communities long before the establishment of present-day municipalities. These spaces continue to be integral parts of a broader cultural and social landscape. Community halls have the potential to function as powerful mechanisms for community safety, connection and wellbeing and Strathcona County is committed to the values of reconciliation, respect, and inclusion.

We acknowledge our collective responsibility to ensure that community halls serve as inclusive spaces where all community members, including Indigenous peoples feel welcome, valued and a sense of belonging.

## Project Acknowledgements

Thank you to all Community Hall Operators, community members, volunteers, leaders and partners that operate and support these halls and contributed their expertise, passion and hopes to the development of the Community Hall Strategy.

### Community Hall Operators

- Art Society of Strathcona County
- Antler Lake Uncas Community League
- Ardrossan Recreation & Agricultural Society
- Ardrossan 55 Plus Club
- Brookville Community League
- Colchester Community League
- Colchester & District Agricultural Society
- Good Hope Community Club
- Hastings Lake Community Association
- Josephsburg Agricultural Society
- Josephsburg Area 5 Seniors
- Deville/North Cooking Lake Community League
- Partridge Hill Community Club
- Sherwood Park 55 Plus Club
- South Cooking Lake Community League
- South Cooking Lake Senior Citizens' Club
- Whitecroft Community League
- Wye Community League

## Introduction

### Purpose

Community halls are vital social, cultural, and historical assets in our communities. They offer places for people to connect, hold events and run programs. During emergencies, they can provide infrastructure for community support. They help make communities lively and healthy, but they face challenges like changing community needs, aging facilities, dependence on volunteers and the complexity of navigating the County's systems and processes. Community halls are valued as an important piece of community infrastructure in the County, particularly in rural areas, and contribute to Strathcona County's vision to become Canada's most livable community.

The purpose of the Community Halls Strategy (Strategy) is to:

1. Share a vision for community halls in Strathcona County and guiding principles to achieve it.
2. Introduce shared outcomes and priority areas for action for Hall Operators and County to work toward the vision.
3. Identify supports and priorities for the viability and sustainability of Hall Operators and their organizations.
4. Clarify the roles and expectations of Hall Operators and Strathcona County.
5. Provide community data and insights to support decision-making (Appendices).

### Background

There are 18 facilities (16 freestanding buildings) (Appendix A); 14 community halls and 4 seniors' centres located throughout Strathcona County (County). The County owns the infrastructure and is responsible for maintenance of the halls and outdoor areas, ensuring that the infrastructure and systems are maintained to meet each facility's intended use. The County holds license agreements with the community associations that operate the halls (Hall Operators) (Appendix B). These include agricultural societies, seniors' clubs, community organizations and an arts society. While the County does not have a dedicated funding source to support capital improvements, the County may work with the Hall Operators to pursue infrastructure grants for such projects. Hall Operators can rent out the venue for community use and re-invest any funds raised to support operations or future projects as they see fit. While facility changes must be approved by the County, there is no consistent or overarching process to oversee or ensure alignment across facilities in how funds are re-invested.

Historically, the Hall Operators have independently run and managed the community halls. This independence has created a strong sense of pride and responsibility among Hall Operators. They and their dedicated volunteers and membership are crucial for keeping the halls active and improving community well-being.

This Strategy builds on the 2016 Community Hall Sustainability Strategy which considered input from broader community engagement, research review of other municipalities, and the community hall facility condition reports. The following also informed the strategy's development (details in Appendix C):

1. Community Profiles- Population, history, economy, facility and space inventory
2. Public engagement with Community Hall Representatives- Value and role of community halls (Appendix D) to community and hall operator needs, interests and aspirations

3. Trends- Research and best practices
4. Environmental scan- Ownership, funding and governance of community halls in other Alberta municipalities
5. County Plans and Policies- Broader planning review

### **Strategic Alignment**

Strathcona County aspires to become Canada's most livable community, and the Strategy supports this vision by aligning with the priority goals of the 2023-26 Strategic Plan:

- **Healthy and safe community:** community halls support a welcoming inclusive community and provide spaces for social supports that enhance community well-being, safety and builds community connections.
- **Responsible development:** community halls are infrastructure investments that support the development of complete communities. As the County grows and neighborhoods evolve, strategic planning is crucial to supporting daily living needs with community infrastructure, including halls, enabling residents to live, work and play locally.
- **Municipal excellence:** optimally utilized community halls serve as valuable assets, meeting diverse community needs and enhances service delivery.
- **Economic prosperity:** halls can be the hub of thriving rural communities to support local economic growth.

The Strategy also aligns with Strathcona County's Community Safety and Wellbeing Strategy, Municipal Development Plan, Recreation and Culture Strategy, Municipal Land Framework, Agriculture Master Plan, Asset Management Plans and Older Adults Strategy, all of which envision socially and economically thriving communities in the County. Aligning County plans and policies helps to coordinate efforts to address the interconnected aspects of community life, enhance resource efficiency and promote movement toward shared outcomes.

### **Current State**

The County's changing social, cultural, recreational and leisure contexts (Appendix E) are influencing how people connect, engage, and participate in community life, which in turn impacts the use and functionality of community halls now and into the future. Two-thirds of the County's community hall facilities were built prior to 1980. Community halls were designed and constructed to the standards of the time, and some halls may require substantial investment.

### **County Role and Supports to Community Halls**

The County and Hall Operators have responsibilities and roles in activating and supporting community hall facilities. The current relationship and responsibilities between the County and Hall Operators are described through license agreements that may differ between each hall. County support and services are provided across various areas of the organization and are summarized into three key areas: financial, infrastructure and maintenance, and in-kind support.

Strathcona County Supports and Services Dedicated to Halls	
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grants (e.g. Community connection, arts and culture programming and events, large scale events, in some cases matching grant dollars)</li> <li>- Utility subsidies</li> <li>- Provision to generate revenue</li> <li>- Insurance for the building</li> <li>- Community Partnership Program to support additions or enhancement of outdoor amenities. Community hall associations are required to provide a financial contribution of \$20,000.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure and Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facility provision</li> <li>- Facility and outdoor grounds and amenities maintenance</li> <li>- Capital improvements</li> <li>- Parking lot maintenance</li> </ul>
In-Kind Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaboration on large community wide events (e.g. Christmas in the Heartland/Country)</li> <li>- Community Partnership Program to support addition or enhancement of outdoor amenities</li> <li>- Facilitate connections for community development and capacity building (e.g. Volunteer Strathcona, Board governance workshops with Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations)</li> <li>- Dedicated staff who specialize in support for Hall Operators, serving as point of contact for non-facility-related needs</li> <li>- Assistance in completing permits</li> <li>- Access to small County items and equipment</li> <li>- Event planning support</li> <li>- Emergency response coordination</li> <li>- Board governance support</li> </ul>

### Themes from Focused Public Engagement Sessions

Insights from two engagement sessions with Hall Operators helped shape the Strategy, highlighting key themes such as:

- **No “One Size Fits All” Approach:** Flexibility is essential to the Strategy. Each community hall is unique, with its own character, needs, and role within the community. Service levels provided by the County are consistent.
- **Innovation and Creativity:** Hall Operators are eager to pursue creative projects and reimagine how community hall spaces are used and adapt to evolving community interests and needs.
- **Autonomy and Ownership:** Although community halls are owned by the County, they have historically operated with autonomy, managed by various Hall Operators. This autonomy has instilled a strong sense of pride, responsibility, and stewardship among Hall Operators.
- **Cultural Heritage:** Preserving the cultural heritage and history associated with community halls may be a priority for Hall Operators.
- **Extension of Home:** Community halls enhance community life and create opportunities for connection with neighbors.

- **Networking and Collaboration:** Hall Operators value opportunities to connect and network to exchange ideas, learn from one another and strengthen the collective impact of community halls.
- **Shared Challenges:** Common challenges across halls include volunteer recruitment and retention, navigating County systems, and the need for governance and County administrative support.
- **Role Clarity:** There is a need for clear definitions of roles, responsibilities, and expectations between the County and Hall Operators.

These insights are consistent with 2015 engagement findings that informed the 2016 Community Halls Sustainability Strategy.

### Shared Challenges

The shared challenges between the County and Hall Operators are summarized as follows.

<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of role clarity between departments.</li> <li>- Roles and relationships between the County and community halls and their operators are not always clear.</li> <li>- Limited mechanisms to evaluate the overall impact of community halls as existing key performance indicators and deliverables are grant specific and do not provide a comprehensive view of their broader community impact.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unclear how to approach a strategic re-investment across community halls.</li> <li>- While grants are available from other levels of government, the County may need to cover up to 50% of project costs and be prepared to fund the full amount if needed due to cost overruns or grant limitations.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Challenges resolving facility issues when multiple departments are involved</li> <li>- Buildings were constructed according to the standards of the day. Once a certain level of repair/maintenance/renovation are completed, this may trigger a more significant renovation to bring certain components up to modern code.</li> <li>- Majority of community halls and senior centers are over 40 years old. While the County has made prior capital investments, updated building assessments are needed to accurately determine the remaining lifespan of each facility, as conditions and investment needs may vary across locations.</li> <li>- In the past, service level standards for infrastructure varied across facilities, with no clear process for consistent communication or understanding of expectations.</li> <li>- Older buildings do not always meet current community needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity and Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concerns regarding sustainability of volunteer boards that operate the halls due to volunteer recruitment, retention and burnout challenges.</li> <li>- Utilization and activity across halls vary significantly. Some halls focus solely on facility rental and others provide or facilitate services, programs and events for the local community.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demographic and cultural shifts changing community needs, interests and expectations, how people connect, share information and participate in community life.</li> </ul>

## Vision

*“Strathcona County Community Halls are vibrant volunteer led, inclusive hubs that foster intergenerational connections, celebrate community, and enrich lives through diverse programs and events.”*

## Principles

### Trust and Accountability

We aim to build relationships based on respect, clear communication and transparency, to create lasting impact and a stronger network of communities.

### Community Building

We value community halls as extensions of our homes and we use them to make social connections and contribute to the overall wellbeing of our communities.

### Inclusivity and Diversity

Our facilities and activities are accessible, welcoming, and beneficial to everyone including families, older adults, persons with diverse abilities, and people of all social and ethnic backgrounds.

### Sustainability

We focus on being financially and environmentally responsible, recognizing the limits of financial and environmental resources, social and human capacity.

## Shared Outcomes

Shared outcomes are the broad collective goals that will guide the governance and operations of community halls. These outcomes aim to align the efforts of the County, Hall Operators and others toward the vision.

<b>Connected Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Community halls and their operators meet evolving community needs and interests and reflect local voices through collaborative processes</li><li>- Everyone feels welcome and a sense of belonging, with opportunities to participate as user groups, volunteers, leaders, or attendees</li></ul>
<b>Collaboration and Partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Community halls are supported with opportunities to collaborate, network, share information and work toward shared vision</li><li>- Strengthened partnership between County and Hall Operators improves resource efficiency, reduces duplication and enhances service delivery</li><li>- During emergencies, community halls provide infrastructure and support, contributing to community resilience</li></ul>
<b>Community Wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Halls serve as essential social and cultural hubs by facilitating access to programs, services and information</li><li>- Halls are accessible and welcoming places that encourage neighborliness, community safety and reduce social isolation</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community halls reflect and celebrate their unique physical, cultural and social characteristics</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Sustainability and Asset Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community halls are maintained for long-term viability</li> <li>- Sufficient revenue covers operating costs, with surplus reinvested into building improvements, community events activities and future projects</li> <li>- Financial management is transparent and accountable</li> <li>- Reinvestment decisions are guided by lifecycle assessments. Community input further helps prioritize equitable provision of services and facilities that meet current and future utilization needs</li> </ul>

## Achieving the Outcomes

The tables below provide a framework to guide implementation of actions and measure progress toward the shared vision and outcomes.

**County Priority Areas for Action** are actionable, shorter-term steps that connect what the County and Hall Operators do with the outcomes they want to achieve. They focus on addressing barriers and challenges that are crucial for moving forward effectively. As actions are implemented, other actions may be identified to make continued progress toward the vision.

**Roles and Expectations** outlines County and Hall Operators responsibilities and minimum expectations for achieving the vision and outcomes. By defining roles and expectations we aim to enhance the overall effectiveness and sustainability of community halls. The expectations promote accountability and transparency and facilitate collaboration among the County and Hall Operators.

<b>Shared Outcome 1: Connected Community</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community halls and their operators meet evolving community needs and interests and reflect local voices through collaborative processes</li> <li>- Everyone feels welcome and a sense of belonging, with opportunities to participate as user groups, volunteers, leaders or attendees</li> </ul>	
<b>County Priority Areas for Action</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen board governance through targeted support</li> <li>- Support volunteer recruitment and retention to enhance hall management and operations</li> <li>- Recognize and celebrate contributions of Hall Operators and volunteers</li> </ul>	
<b>County and Hall Operator Roles and Expectations</b>	
County:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognize the role and contribution of community halls, Hall Operators and volunteers</li> </ul>
Hall Operator:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adjust community hall activities such as programming, services and events according to evolving needs and interests of local community members</li> <li>- Utilize County-provided training, development opportunities and access to resources as needed</li> <li>- Create an inclusive environment for participation including user groups, volunteers, leaders and attendees</li> </ul>
Shared:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share information about community needs and changing demographics</li> </ul>

<b>Shared Outcome 2: Collaboration and Partnership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Halls are supported with opportunities to collaborate, network, share information and work toward shared vision</li> <li>- Strengthened partnership between County and Hall Operators improves resource efficiency, reduces duplication and enhances service delivery</li> <li>- During emergencies, halls provide infrastructure and support, contributing to community resilience</li> </ul>
<b>County Priority Areas for Action</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarify roles and responsibilities between Hall Operators and the County</li> <li>- Establish clear and simple processes for communication including service-related concerns, grants, and other community hall issues</li> <li>- Develop a digital platform to facilitate information sharing between County and Hall Operators</li> <li>- Create networking opportunities for Hall Operators</li> <li>- Increase awareness of communication tools for promoting community halls</li> <li>- Communicate that community halls may be utilized when required during emergency events</li> </ul>
<b>County and Hall Operator Roles and Expectations</b>
<p>County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and facilitate connections that can enhance resource sharing and service delivery for halls</li> <li>- Convene Hall Operators annually to support networking and collaboration</li> <li>- Maintain a dedicated County webpage with resources for Hall Operators</li> <li>- Offer ongoing training, development opportunities and access to resources on helpful topics such as governance, volunteer management or grants</li> <li>- Provide dedicated staff who provide support for Hall Operators, serving as point of contact for non-facility-related needs</li> <li>- Provide information to Hall Operators on what happens when a hall is required to be used in an emergency response</li> </ul>
<p>Hall Operator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure community halls are ready to serve as support infrastructure during emergencies</li> <li>- Collaborate with other Hall Operators to share resources, knowledge, and best practices</li> </ul>
<p>Shared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commit to respectful collaboration to achieve the shared vision and outcomes, building a strong working relationship based on trust, transparency and effective communication</li> <li>- Maintain responsive and timely communication to ensure efficient resource management and coordinated efforts between the County and Hall Operators</li> </ul>

<b>Shared Outcome 3: Community Wellbeing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Halls serve as essential social and cultural hubs by facilitating access to programs, services and information</li> <li>- Halls are accessible and welcoming places that encourage neighborliness, community safety, and reduce social isolation</li> <li>- Community halls reflect and celebrate their unique physical, cultural and social characteristics</li> </ul>
<b>County Priority Areas for Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage broad utilization of community halls across the County</li> <li>- Share information on historical designation process as needed</li> </ul>
<b>County and Hall Operator Roles and Expectations</b>
County: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide grants and in-kind supports to support the use of halls as social and cultural hubs, supporting communities and cultural heritage</li> <li>- Support community hall events and programming through municipal permitting assistance and coordination of resources as needed</li> </ul>
Hall Operator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create inclusive, welcoming spaces where people of all backgrounds feel comfortable participating as user groups, volunteers, leaders and attendees</li> <li>- Support and promote activities that enhance social connection community well-being</li> <li>- Respond to changing needs in the community</li> <li>- Report annually on facility utilization providing data to support ongoing understanding of hall impact and value</li> </ul>
Shared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work together to promote inclusivity by developing policies and practices that create a welcoming atmosphere at community halls</li> <li>- Collaborate to develop a simple to use tool that evaluates the impact of halls including utilization</li> </ul>

<b>Shared Outcome 4: Financial Sustainability and Asset Management</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community halls are maintained for long-term viability</li> <li>- Sufficient revenue covers operating costs with surplus reinvested into the community including capital improvements</li> <li>- Financial management is transparent and accountable</li> <li>- Outdoor amenities are maintained and replaced on lifecycle assessments</li> <li>- Reinvestment decisions are guided by lifecycle assessments. Community input further helps prioritize equitable provision of services and facilities that meet current and future utilization needs.</li> </ul>
<b>County Priority Areas for Action</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review County maintenance program and performance reporting</li> <li>- Improve process for efficient and effective maintenance of community halls</li> <li>- Develop Community Hall Investment Framework</li> </ul>
<b>County and Hall Operator Roles and Expectations</b>
<p>County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitor and maintain community hall infrastructure, outdoor spaces according to lease agreements and fulfill service agreements</li> <li>- Plan and complete replacements of critical building systems with a like-for-like approach as the baseline, while incorporating necessary improvements to meet code compliance, enhance operational efficiency, and support environmental sustainability goals</li> <li>- Communicate annual financial reporting requirements to Hall Operators in a timely and consistent manner</li> <li>- Offer grants, subsidies, funding programs or in-kind support to support hall operations and building maintenance when required</li> <li>- Communicate County processes and decision making regarding financial investment and reinvestment</li> <li>- Establish clear and consistent facility and service standards, processes and communication</li> <li>- Support Hall Operators in maintaining safety and accessibility standards</li> </ul>
<p>Hall Operator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide financial statements on an annual basis as per legislation applicable to Hall Operator status</li> <li>- Monitor and maintain interior infrastructure to ensure their long-term viability</li> <li>- Generate sufficient revenue to cover operating costs, with any surplus reinvested into building improvements, community events and future projects</li> <li>- Rental rates for Community Halls are publicly posted and easily accessible</li> </ul>
<p>Shared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uphold terms of the license and service agreements</li> <li>- Collaborate to identify funding streams, grants or partnerships that enhance financial sustainability and support future reinvestment</li> <li>- Commit to engage community to inform community hall reinvestment</li> </ul>

## Next Steps

To move from planning to implementation, the following steps outline the actions needed to bring the Strategy to life:

1. **Develop an implementation plan** that specifies timelines, roles, and resources needed to address the priority areas for action. This plan will enable both the County and Hall Operators to address priorities while identifying future actions to sustain progress toward the vision.
2. **Define evaluation methods and regular reporting processes** to monitor progress on priority areas for action and shared outcomes, supported by regular reporting processes. These efforts will promote transparency and accountability and guide the County and Hall Operators to assess impact, identify challenges and make data informed adjustments to strategy implementation.
3. **Develop an investment framework** to inform financial decisions for community halls, prioritizing long-term viability and evolving community needs and alignment with the County's social, environmental, and financial priorities.
4. **Foster continuous collaboration and communication** with Community Hall Operators and other key partners to gather input, receive feedback and maintain transparency by keeping everyone informed and involved on the strategy progress.

## Conclusion

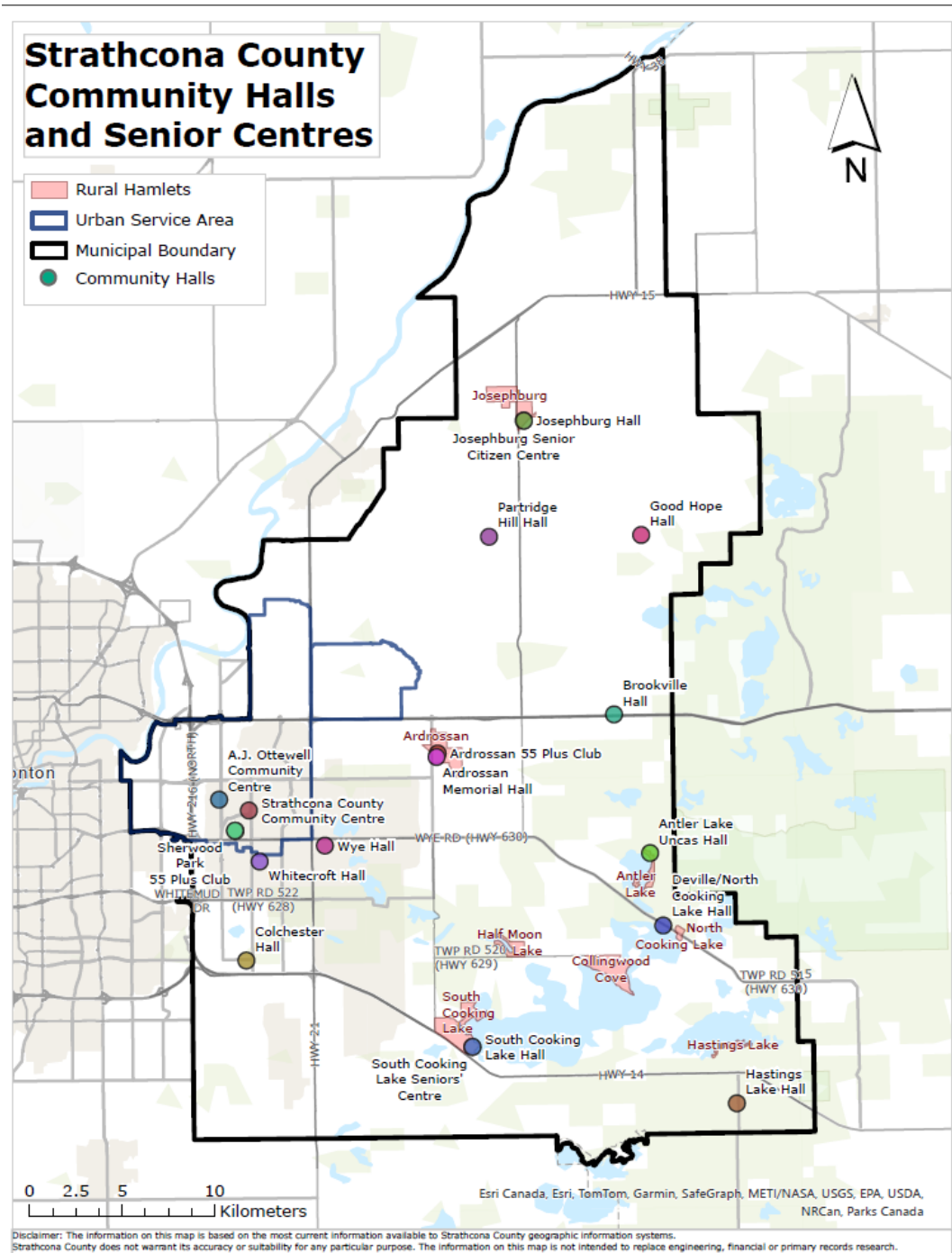
The ongoing contributions of Hall Operators, their volunteers, and the County's support underscore the critical role that community halls play as the heart of the County's communities. Halls facilitate connection, celebrate local heritage, and enhance well-being across the County. As community life has evolved, so have the ways people connect, participate and seek support from neighbors and others.

We are grateful for the energy and passion shared by Hall Operators, community partners and administration in developing this strategy, aligning the efforts of the County and Hall Operators toward the vision for community halls.

By focusing on shared outcomes, priority areas for action, and minimum expectations, this strategy paves a pathway for the long-term viability and sustainability of community halls. As we move forward into implementation, ongoing collaboration, flexibility and community engagement will be essential to ensuring that community halls continue to meet evolving needs and strengthen the fabric of our communities for years to come.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Community Halls and Seniors Centres Map



## Appendix B: Definition of Community Halls and Community Hall Operators

### **Community Hall Definition**

Community halls are publicly owned assets of Strathcona County, with County ownership extending to the physical building, land and outdoor amenities such as firepits, ball diamonds, sports fields, park furnishings, tennis/basketball courts and playgrounds. The programming of these spaces are managed by local Community Hall Operators, who play a crucial role in ensuring the halls are vibrant spaces. The County provides financial and in-kind support while overseeing infrastructure and maintenance, including outdoor spaces.

As multi-functional hubs, their primary purpose is to provide space to foster social connection, community engagement and promote overall wellbeing. Revenue generated from rentals provides an income stream that supports community programs and events. Additionally, community halls contribute to the preservation of local heritage and can serve as supportive resources during times of emergency. Community halls accommodate both private rentals and public gatherings, playing a vital role in placemaking, offering spaces that bring people together for social, recreational and cultural activities while supporting the unique needs and identity of the local community.

### **Community Hall Operator Definition**

Community Hall Operators are local groups, registered under relevant Alberta legislation, responsible for the day-to-day management and long-term operations of community halls. Hall Operators have autonomy in overseeing hall rentals, organizing events, maintaining certain outdoor areas (such as gymkhana arenas, outdoor storage buildings, horseshoe pits), and reinvesting revenue generated into the hall's upkeep and future projects.

Together, the County and Hall Operators align the operational use of the halls with broader community wide objectives and shared outcomes such as social wellbeing, fostering belonging and meeting evolving community needs.

In some cases, Hall Operators align with multiple frameworks based on their organization's specific purpose and mandate. For example, Senior's clubs and groups, which serve a specific demographic, align with not only this Strategy but also with Healthy Aging Strathcona County. The Community Halls Strategy defines the facility-related roles, responsibilities, and expectations of Hall Operators and the County, while Healthy Aging Strathcona County describes how community organizations and the County can support healthy aging.

## Appendix C: Methods Informing Development of Community Hall Strategy

To ensure that planning and decision-making are data-driven, aligned with the County's organizational goals, and focused on maximizing public benefit while supporting community use, a variety of methods informed the development of this strategy, including:

- Review of relevant County reports
  - 2016 Calder Bateman What We Heard Report
  - Strathcona County- State of Infrastructure Report 2023
  - Strathcona County Community Trends 2021
  - Community Hall Facility Condition Reports
- Broader planning review of county plans and policies
  - Strathcona County's Community Safety and Wellbeing Strategy
  - Municipal Development Plan
  - Recreation and Culture Strategy
  - Municipal Land Framework
  - Agriculture Master Plan
  - Asset Management Plans
  - Healthy Aging Strathcona County
- Financial and Utilization information request resulting from Anderson motion
- Engagement with Community Hall Operators
  - Session 1- April 2024
  - Session 2- June 2024
  - Email update – June 2025
- Regional environmental scan of Community Halls- 3 Counties, 5 Cities, 1 Regional Municipality
- Community Hall Profiles
- 2024 Census Information and GIS Information Request
- Current and future context in Strathcona County within which services are delivered as identified through other related County plans and policies
- Relevant consultation
  - Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
  - Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
  - City of Edmonton Neighborhood Initiatives

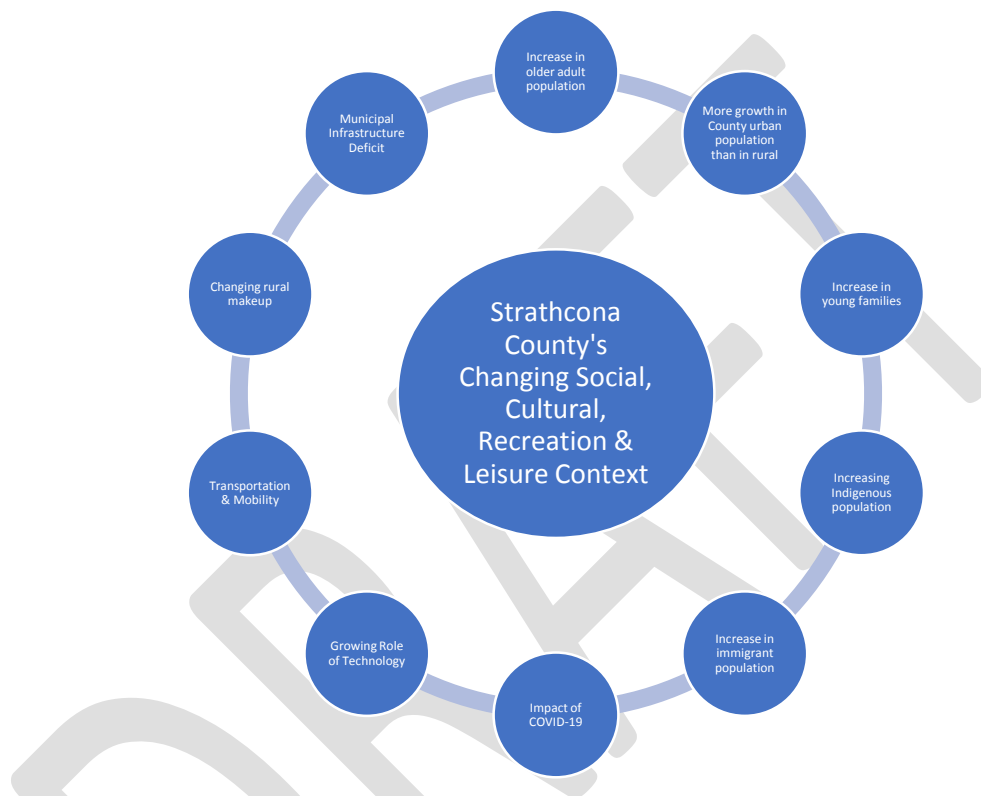
## Appendix D: Value of Community Halls

Community Halls are versatile spaces that serve multiple functions. They are valuable public assets that, when optimally utilized, provide interconnected benefits described in the table below. While individual halls serve their unique local populations and may differ in how they are used, together they contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of community life.

<b>Community Engagement and Connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Halls offer opportunities for residents to engage as user groups, volunteers, leaders or attendees through accessible events and activities</li><li>- Hall operators connect with community to address local needs and interests, ensuring that hall activities reflect community voices</li></ul>
<b>Social and Cultural Hubs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Halls serve as essential social and cultural hubs, where they foster neighborliness, community safety, and reduce social isolation</li><li>- Halls facilitate access to programs, services, events, activities, resources and other information that promote overall health and well-being</li><li>- Halls preserve and share both colonial and Indigenous histories</li><li>- Halls reflect Strathcona County's rural and agricultural heritage</li><li>- During emergencies, halls provide infrastructure and support, contributing to community resilience</li></ul>
<b>Access Points to Services, Programs and Skill Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Community halls are vital spaces that facilitate access to services, skill development opportunities, resources, and Wi-Fi, particularly, in rural communities where there may be gaps in accessibility</li></ul>
<b>Sustainable Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Revenue generated from rentals provides an income stream that supports community programs and events, hall's upkeep and future projects</li><li>- Halls support indoor and outdoor utilization</li></ul>

## Appendix E: Changing Social, Cultural and Recreational Context of Strathcona County

The County's social, cultural, recreational and leisure landscape has evolved, influenced by a variety of factors outlined below. These shifts significantly affect the current and future utilization, functionality and potential of community halls. By providing a contextual foundation informed by data and trends, this section highlights the importance of community halls as adaptable and valuable infrastructure, ensuring the County can better anticipate and plan for future needs within this dynamic landscape.



<b>Evolving Demographics and Community Needs</b>	As the County's population evolves, community halls must adapt to meet the unique needs of diverse groups, including older adults, young families, Indigenous peoples and new immigrants. This includes providing age-friendly and family-centered activities, supporting cultural preservation, celebration, educational events, supporting integration and cultural exchange. These efforts enhance social connection, community cohesion and diverse programming ensuring that halls are vibrant, inclusive and accessible spaces for all.
<b>Urban Growth and Shifting Rural Context</b>	The County's urban areas are expanding more rapidly than rural regions; strategic planning is essential to ensure equitable access to resources and facilities across all communities. Rural areas are experiencing shifts, including fewer farms, more acreages and a changing connection to agricultural heritage. Community halls play an important role in serving both urban and rural residents and preserving rural and agricultural heritage.
<b>The need for Resilience and</b>	The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of adaptable, resilient community halls, as many faced programming losses, reduced connections, and volunteer challenges. Change such as the growing role of technology can support

<b>Adaptability Through change</b>	recovery by enabling virtual engagement, broadening access, and offering new ways to connect and reimagine the use of these spaces.
<b>Transportation and Mobility: Reshaping Connection with Community Halls</b>	Improved mobility options such as trails, and accessible services increase participation and bridge geographic divides. Greater access to transportation allows broader participation in activities and fosters a more interconnected community.
<b>Municipal Infrastructure Deficit</b>	Alberta, and Canada overall faces an infrastructure deficit, affecting funding for maintenance and growth. Community halls are part of this deficit, highlighting the need for sustainable infrastructure planning.