Partnerships in Recreation and Parks

Planning for the Future Together

Executive Summary for Community Recreation Partner Groups

Community Recreation Partnerships

Recreation and Parks

April 2024

Contents

INTRODUCTION 1

Partnerships in Recreation and Parks 1

Corporate Alignment 2

PARTNERSHIP PHILOSOPHY 3

Purpose 3

Partnership Principles 3

Partnership Areas 4

Partnership Contributions 5

PARTNERSHIP LIFECYCLE 6

Discovery 6

Development 6

Animation 7

Review 7

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK 7

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES 8

Formalizing a Partnership 8

INTRODUCTION

Partnerships in Recreation and Parks

Recreation and Parks are integral to the quality of life for St. Albertans. As such, the City of St. Albert (the City) plays a leading role within the local recreation and parks ecosystem through the direct provision of recreation facilities, programs, and services. The City also recognizes that that there are many other actors in the community working to enhance the quality of life for our citizens. As such, the City continually looks to work directly with these actors to extend and enhance the range, quality, and accessibility of recreation opportunities for residents of St. Albert and the surrounding area. As the community continues to grow and change, the City recognizes that creating and maintaining capacity to meet emerging needs requires developing a relationship between all those involved in providing these opportunities.

Recreation and Parks (the Department) maintains relationships with many organizations throughout the city and the region related to recreation and parks opportunities. These relationships take different forms and serve different functions. They can be informal or formal, legally required, transactional, strategic, or friendly. Partnership represents one form of relationship between the City and the community. Given the social value we place on a partnership it is important that we are consistent in how we a think about our partnerships with community, how we evaluate the partnerships we are in, and how we approach new opportunities for partnership.

Not all relationships are partnerships, and it is important to evaluate whether a partnership is best suited for any given relationship.

Partnership

A formal mutually agreed upon relationship between two organizations focused on achieving specific outcomes or objectives.

Relationship

An ongoing connection between organizations

The document is intended to serve as a foundation for all partnerships across the Department. It is divided into four sections:

1) Partnership Philosophy,

2) Partnership Lifecycle,

3) Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, and

4) Business Unit Processes.

Corporate Alignment

Partnerships managed by Recreation and Parks are partnerships with the City of St. Albert. As such, all our partnerships must align with Department and City priorities, approaches, and plans. Understanding these corporate directions is critical to ensuring that our partnerships are developed, evaluated, and actioned in support of the whole community.

Key Corporate directions include:

Municipal Development Plan – Flourish (2021)

Vision

St. Albert is a vibrant, innovative, and thriving city that we all call home, that sustains and cherishes its unique identity and small-town values. We are the botanical arts city.

Community Well-being Goal

St. Albert supports the physical, mental, and social well-being of residents through community services and neighbourhoods that support healthy lifestyles.

Policies

11.3.5. Collaborate with partners to develop innovative programs and accessible facilities.

Recreation and Parks Master Plan (2016 and 2022 Update)

Vision

St Albert: An active and engaged community. Active communities are healthy and proud.

Recreation is a catalyst for getting residents and visitors active— mentally, physically, and socially. For people to use recreation, they must be engaged not only in the activity in which they are participating, but also in their community. St Albert engages residents through recreation participation and engages delivery partner groups in recreation service delivery.

Mission

Creating quality of life and community building through recreation.

This mission is achieved by advancing strategic priorities and tactics under three priority areas:

Building: Recreation and Parks builds and maintains recreation facilities and parks to ensure longevity and meet community needs

Partnering: Recreation and Parks partners with the community in the delivery of recreation to provide recreation opportunities and build community connectedness.

Delivering: Recreation and Parks directly delivers recreation programs, services, facilities, and parks to foster community well-being.

PARTNERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

Each partnership is reflection of the moment in which it was it was formed. This moment includes a wide range of social, economic, philosophical, environmental, and political factors. It also includes a series of choices, assumptions, and beliefs about: why partnership is important, what a partnership is, and how partnership should operate? The why, what, and how of partnership form the foundation of a partnership philosophy. This section provides a sketch of our partnership philosophy, identifying the critical principles, values, and purposes that should be reflected throughout a partnership.

Purpose

Partnerships must aim to advance the interests of the community, as expressed by council priorities, strategic plans, corporate directives, and department service levels.

As Administration seeks to ensure the relevance of its partnerships and justify specific municipal investments, it needs to set parameters that respect the unique interests and capacities of the municipality and the partnering agency. The following sections identify core values to be respected while engaging in self and collective reflection.

Partnership Principles

- Partnership is a distinct relationship formed to support and enhance shared interest.
- Partnership requires defined benefits for each party.
- Each partnership is unique.

- Partners have equal agency[1] within the partnership.
- Partnership requires mutual trust, respect, and commitment.
- Partnerships evolve to address current needs, capacities, and interests.
- Partnership benefits should be reflective of the relative investment of each partner.

Rights & Responsibilities:

Partners are responsible for:

- Establishing a clearly defined purpose.
- Making a meaningful investment of resources towards achieving their purpose.
- Maintaining open and timely communication on all matters that have or could have impacts on the partnership.
- Honouring the spirit, and governing terms of the partnership.

Partners have the right to:

- Not be exploited.
- Define meaningful forms of reciprocity.
- Establish conditions and practices that protect and honour their respective cultures, interests, and responsibilities.

Partnership Areas

Partnerships contribute to improving the quality of life of St. Albert residents. This may be through direct provision of services or infrastructure that support recreation activities or indirectly through knowledge transfer, skill development or increasing available funding and resources that enables enhanced recreation service delivery.

Partnership Areas are organized to reflect the demands and interests of departmental business units. In addition to the previously discussed elements, partnership areas provide additional context for reviewing and shaping the specific nature (e.g., objectives, outcomes, or impacts, and investments) of a partnership.

Facility Operations

Control over and responsibility over an entire facility, amenity of site, or portion thereof, for a specific purpose. This includes built or natural structures and spaces.

[1] Agency – capacity of an individual or organization to effectively determine and fulfil their potential.

Example: St. Albert Curling Club

Facility or Land Use

Access to an entire facility, amenity or site or portion thereof, or amenity for a specific purpose. This includes built or natural structures and spaces.

Example: St. Albert Rugby Football Club

Capital Development

Contributions in support of the development or enhancement of a facility, amenity or site or portion thereof. This includes built or natural structures or spaces.

Example: Fowler Athletic Park

Strategic Priorities

A contribution towards advancing a strategic priority. This is more common around areas of knowledge transfer or general planning and exploration that could lead to the identification and advancement of specific partnership opportunities.

Example Community Amenities Project

Partnership Contributions

Partnership Contributions capture the broad range of assets that the City can offer to or receive from a partnership, or that may be jointly developed as the result of a partnership. Specific contributions will be reflective of the unique needs and capacities of the partners, and the defined partnership opportunity. General kinds of contributions include:

- Space/Land
- Infrastructure
- Money
- Expertise/Knowledge
- Labour / Services
- Market / Community Access
- Political Influence or Access
- Subsides for Access or Use

PARTNERSHIP LIFECYCLE

Partnerships are a living relationship. They reflect the broad environment in which they exist and the actions and intentions of the people who care for them (nature). Understanding the partnership lifecycle is important for establishing processes and practices that support critical reflection, evaluation, and purposeful action. It is also important for framing partnership success, challenges, and failures.

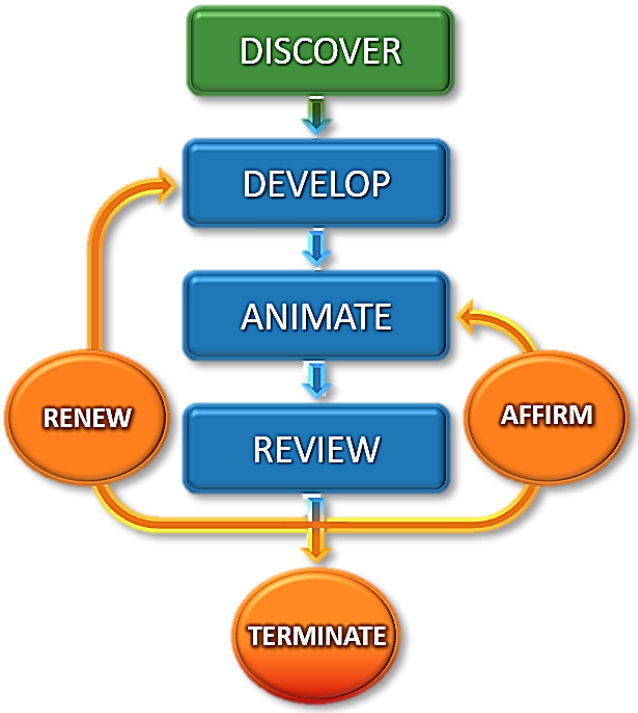


Figure 1: Partnership Lifecycle

We have identified four lifecycle phases:

- Discovery
- Development
- Animation
- Review

Each phase is connected to the phase(s) that come before it (see Figure 1). All the phases are shaped by the partnership principles previously identified.

Discovery

This is a self-reflective phase of work that precedes any partnered activity. Each potential partner (agent) should consider its starting position, needs, wants, and capacity for investing in and benefitting from a partnership

Development

In this phase, actors, as potential partners, engage with each other to explore potential benefits, outcomes, objectives, and impacts to partnering. If each potential partner can identify a benefit in partnering, further discussion around the conditions of partnership can proceed. In this phase, the benefits of the potential partnership are fully explored and quantified wherever possible.

Animation

In this phase the actors, as potential partners, transition to full partners, as outlined by the terms of the partnership. This is the ongoing implementation phase of the partnership, as defined by the terms put in place in the development phase and outlined in the partnership agreement. This phase requires active engagement, communication, support, and ongoing commitment for success.

While the initial conditions frame the start of this phase, they can be adapted through mutual agreement. Change to the partnership conditions should be documented.

Review

As a conditional relationship, it follows that if conditions of a partnership change, then the validity of the partnership should be reviewed. In these moments of conditional change, the partners should review the value of the partnership and determine if the partnership should be affirmed under its existing terms, renewed to reflect the new conditions, or terminated.

If the partnership is advancing towards its stated aims and functioning in accordance with partnership principles, then the review affirms the current terms of the partnership, through agreement renewal and the partners return to Animation until the next Review.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Successful partnerships require purposeful and frequent monitoring and evaluation (M&E). M&E is important at all stages of the partnership lifecycle.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

Partnership outcomes and benefits should be directly tied to the City's service provision and goals of the Department. They are supported by appropriate and formalized governance structures, agreements and roles and responsibilities that enable shared clarity and positive relationship building.

Formalizing a Partnership

All partnerships need to be documented. The City uses several typical agreements to establish formal agreements with outside agencies. These agreements focus generally on spaces, funding, or permissions. In each case the partnership intent needs to be made explicit, either through the agreement or under an existing partnership agreement. Typical agreements include:

Lease

An agreement for exclusive use of a specified area of land or property for a specified period. Typically, in the form of landlord tenant relationship, for which the tenant carries a greater responsibility for repair, maintenance, and replacement of infrastructure. Examples include:

- Lease and operation of City facilities in their entirety
- Lease of a portion of a facility, such as for office space in an existing facility
- Lease of entire sites where the partner develops all infrastructure.
- Lease of entire sites where the partner takes over City facilities.
- Lease of facilities or sites that are jointly developed and ultimate ownership is held by one party.

Lease agreements are used to capture complex or long-term relationships, can have significant financial impacts to one or both the parties, and provide a higher level of autonomy for operations within a space. For these reasons significant recourses are required to develop and review lease agreements, and the agreement requires a higher level of signing authority.

License of Occupation

An agreement providing permission of use of land or property for a specific time. Typically, used in situations where use is shorter term or where the owner requires greater control over or responsibility for the repair, maintenance, and replacement of asset and infrastructure, and requiring a moderate level of approval authority. A license may also be used where the duration is long-term, but the impact of the use or development of the space is low risk or exploratory. Examples:

- A license of occupation for use for a specified purpose
- Short to mid-term use of a portion of a facility or site
- Conditional use of space (purposes, times)

Capital Development Agreement

An agreement that outlines terms and conditions under which capital work could be undertaken by a third-party on City owned land or facilities, including leased property.

Memorandum of Understanding/Memorandum of Agreement

An agreement outlining a general commitment to explore or align resources towards a common interest. Typically used in projects where the partnership is more strategic in nature, or when the more prescribed forms of agreement do not meet the needs of the partnership. Examples include:

- Agreements to collaborate with no requirements for joint decision making.
- Agreements to meet specific outcomes within a specific time with variable roles and responsibilities through the lifecycle of the partnership.

Letter of Approval

An agreement that permits a specific activity or action to take within the scope of an already defined agreement (e.g., permission for construction granted under a lease). This would typically include responsibilities of each partner as it relates to the item of consent.

Examples include:

- Grant support letters
- Capital work
- Overnight Parking