THE CITY OF St. Albert

# Report on the Environment 2008

The Environmental Master Plan, completed with input from the community and adopted by Council on January 26, 2009, provides guidance for the City on eight key environmental issues. The 2008 Report on the Environment and future reports will focus on the City's Environmental Master Plan and its specific goals and targets.

To view the Environmental Master Plan document, please visit www.stalbert.ca/environmental-master-plan

City of St. Albert **Office of Environment**
Green by nature

## City of St. Albert's Environmental Policy

The Office of the Environment updated the Environmental Policy in 2008.

*The City of St. Albert is committed to maintaining a healthy natural environment and ensuring its sustainability for future generations.*

The City accomplishes this by adopting the following standards:

- Compliance with all environmental regulations
- Pollution Prevention
- Use of Environmental Management Systems
- Communication of its environmental performance to the corporation and community
- Continuous improvement of its environmental performance

## St. Albert's Ecological Footprint



An ecological footprint measures the impact or demand that people place on the environment, based on natural resource consumption and waste generation. The ecological footprint is measured in hectares per person. The Earth has a finite amount of resources and there are only 1.8 hectares of land and sea resources available to support each person on Earth at this time.

The average world footprint is just over 2.8 hectares per person, meaning that we are consuming resources faster than the Earth can produce them. Canada's average footprint is 7.8 hectares, while St. Albert's footprint is almost 30% higher at 11.7 hectares per person.

Residents count the environment as one of the most important factors contributing to the overall quality of life in St. Albert.
*2008 Community Satisfaction Survey*

## Focus on Education

Education is central to all the goals and targets articulated in the Environmental Master Plan, which focuses on target groups including City Council, employees, residents and business owners. Good information makes for good decisions and the City, through its community initiatives, must ensure that those living and working in St. Albert are provided with the knowledge, opportunities and encouragement to "do the right thing." In this way, the City can effectively lead the community toward achieving its mission of maintaining a healthy natural environment that is sustainable for our community's future.

### Environmental Initiatives Grant Program

In 2008, the City's voluntary Environmental Advisory Committee distributed over $31,000 to 23 groups, including schools, non-profit groups and community groups to help with environmentally focused projects. For more information on how you can apply and for the 2009 allocation deadlines, please visit www.stalbert.ca/environmental-initiatives-grant-program



THE CITY OF St. Albert

# 2008 Report on the Environment

## Promote Sustainable Urban Development

### Where Are We Now?

St. Albert's residential development has mainly consisted of low-density, single housing units. The City's current residential density is approximately seven to eight dwelling units per gross residential hectare. This density is not sustainable, given that the City's population is expected to expand from the current 58,000 to 105,000 people over the next 20 years.

### Where Do We Want To Be?

**Goal: Promote Sustainable Urban Development**

Targets:

- Achieve minimum density of 12 dwelling units per gross residential hectare for new neighbourhoods.
- Achieve a minimum of 30% for medium and/or high-density residential units for new neighbourhoods.



### How Will We Reach Our Targets?

**Smart Growth**

Smart Growth aims to build stronger, healthier and more liveable communities through its policies of higher density developments, improved transit systems, reduced dependence on vehicles and the preservation of natural areas. In 2008, the City completed a Smart Growth survey and is in the education and public consultation stage for the Smart Growth guidelines. Learn more about Smart Growth at www.stalbert.ca/smart-growth

**Transportation Master Plan**

Approved by Council in 2008, the Transportation Master Plan provides a 25-year policy and strategic guide for future improvements to all transportation modes serving St. Albert residents.






## Preserve and Manage Trees, Parks and Natural Areas

### Where Are We Now?

Currently, the City of St. Albert manages over 900 hectares of trees, boulevards, sports fields, parks and natural areas. The extent of these areas represents one of the highest per capita proportions of trees and open spaces for Canadian municipalities.

### Where Do We Want To Be?

**Goal: Preserve and Manage Trees, Parks and Natural Areas**

Targets:

- Complete a review of the current standard for parks and natural areas as part of the Parks and Open Spaces Management Plan (POSMP) and the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) update review process by 2012.
- Protect 100% of proposed designated important natural areas.

### How Will We Reach Our Targets?

**Parks and Open Spaces Management Plan (POSMP)**

In 2008, as part of the plan's 11 key recommendations, the City started a tree inventory, which includes trees on boulevards, streets and median trees.

At the end of 2008, a total of 34,937 trees had been inventoried. The inventory project continues in 2009.

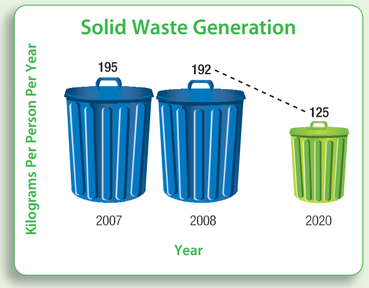
**Community, Education and Incentive Initiatives:**

- *Spruce Up St. Albert* – Community participation within the Spruce Up St. Albert program increased in 2008. The Spruce Up the Sturgeon event, which falls under the Spruce Up St. Albert umbrella, garnered 157 volunteers.

## Reduce Solid Waste Generation

### Where Are We Now?

St. Albert was one of the first communities in Canada to implement a Pay-as-you-Throw (PAYT) program, which has been the key to reducing St. Albert's generation of solid waste. St. Albert's solid waste generation is at 195 kg per person per year, which is much lower than the provincial average of 288 kg per person per year. Also, despite having only one recycling depot and one compost depot, 37% of our waste is being diverted from the landfill.




### Where Do We Want To Be?

**Goal: Reduce Solid Waste Generation**

Targets:

- Reduce solid waste to 125 kg per person per year by 2020.
- Increase solid waste diversion rate to 65% by 2020.

Diversion rates are indicators of the success of a waste system and are calculated as a percentage of the total material diverted from the landfill.

### How Will We Reach Our Targets?

**Solid Waste Management System Review**



In 2008, the City conducted a review of St. Albert's solid waste system. The Solid Waste Management System Review report summarizes existing waste management programs in St. Albert and provides detailed recommendations and outlines options to refine and/or expand the City's solid waste management system.



Administration has recommended the following:

- Simplify the PAYT program
- Implement a curbside recycling program
- Move towards an automated waste collection system
- Implement a curbside yard and kitchen waste organics program

## Reduce Contamination by Improving Hazardous Waste Management

### Where Are We Now?

The City uses hazardous substances in its day-to-day operations, such as chlorine in our water treatment systems and pools and pesticides to control noxious weeds or insect infestations. The proper use, management and disposal of these substances are key to minimizing their potential environmental impacts.

The City is responsible for two properties that have been affected by hazardous materials, the former landfill at Riel Park and the former public works yard in the Riel industrial area.

### Where Do We Want To Be?

**Goal: Reduce Contamination by Improving Hazardous Waste Management**

Targets:

- Reduce municipal pesticide use to 0.5 kg of active ingredients (ai) per hectare or lower by 2020.
- Reduce residential pesticide use by 25% by 2020.
- Complete environmental management plans for both the former landfill site and public works yard by 2012.

### How Will We Reach Our Targets?

**Hazardous Sites and Materials Cleanup:**

- *Phase I of Riel Park Redevelopment* - Phase I of the Riel Park Integrated Redevelopment Plan is complete and a grand opening is scheduled for May 2009.
- *Former RCMP Facility* - In 2008, the City restored the former RCMP building, removing hazardous materials from its interior.

**Reduce Corporate and Community Pesticide Use:**

- *Restricted/Noxious Weed Control* - The largest use of pesticides is for the control of noxious weeds. A pilot program to control noxious weeds through Integrated Pest Management techniques, such as mowing and using biological controls, is ongoing.

Active ingredient (ai) per hectare is a measure of the amount (kilograms) of active pesticide substance used over a certain area. This indicator of pesticide use will be measured going forward.

- *Provincial Ban of the sale of Weed 'n Feed* – Due to the high risk of residents overusing pesticides through Weed 'n Feed products, the Alberta government announced that these lawncare products will be banned starting in January 2010.
- *Household Hazardous Waste Roundup* – In October 2008, the City provided residents the opportunity to safely dispose of household hazardous waste at a one-day roundup event. The following was collected at the event:
  - 13,300 L of liquid hazardous materials (paint, pesticides, etc.);
  - 500 kg of solid hazardous materials (fertilizers, etc.);
  - 503 aerosol cans; and
  - 580 ft of fluorescent light bulbs.

LAND



## Protect and Maintain the Sturgeon River Watershed

### Where Are We Now?

The Sturgeon River water quality is impacted by stormwater runoff from our yards, parks and streets. This runoff can include sand and salt used on roads; oil and gasoline leaks from vehicles; animal waste; and fertilizers and pesticides used in yards.

In 2008, the City collected 440 cubic metres of grit and sand from its catch basins and grit interceptors, which is enough to fill 48 dump trucks.

### Where Do We Want To Be?

**Goal: Protect and Maintain the Sturgeon River Watershed**

Targets:

- River quality is maintained as it moves through St. Albert by 2020.
- Capture 90% of municipal winter road sanding materials by 2020.

### How Will We Reach Our Targets?

**Stormwater Management**

- *Best Management Practices* - The City continues to reduce the amount of grit and sand that reaches the river through its annual stormwater catch basin cleaning program.

**Community, Educational and Incentive Initiatives:**

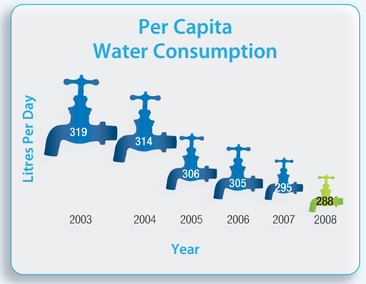
- *Sturgeon River Watershed Initiative Society* - The City of St. Albert is a part of a watershed stewardship group that is working to protect and conserve the Sturgeon River Watershed. In 2008, the group held its first Annual General Meeting, elected a Board of Directors and developed a strategic plan for future activities. For more information, please visit www.stewardsweb.com/sturgeonriver



## Reduce Water Consumption

### Where Are We Now?

The downward trend continues for St. Albert's water consumption, moving from a per capita rate of 295 litres in 2007 to 288 litres in 2008.




### Where Do We Want To Be?

**Goal: Reduce Water Consumption**

Target:

- Reduce water consumption to 200 L per person per day by 2020.



### How Will We Reach Our Targets?

**Community, Educational and Incentive Initiatives:**

- *Water Conservation Campaign* - As part of the City's winter water conservation campaign, residents received a newspaper insert with two toilet tablets encouraging them to check for leaks in their toilets twice a year.
- *Rain Barrel Program* - Continuing with the success of the 2006 and 2007 rain barrel programs, the City sold 550 barrels at a subsidized cost in 2008.

The City partnered with the St. Albert Botanic Park and donated 14 rain barrels for the park's garden series classes, which included a session on water conservation through proper irrigation techniques.



WATER

# Maintain Air Quality

## Where Are We Now?

While air quality in St. Albert is typically classed as 'good' under the Alberta Environment Air Quality Index, Alberta Environment has noted that the Capital Region's particulate and ozone levels are beginning to approach the exceedance triggers of the National Air Quality Standards.

## Where Do We Want To Be?

### Goal: Maintain Air Quality

Targets:

- Complete an Ozone and Particulate Matter Management Plan as part of the Alberta Capital Airshed Alliance by 2009.
- Consult Alberta Environment about establishing a continuous online air quality monitoring station by the end of 2009.

## How Will We Reach Our Targets?

### Alberta Capital Airshed Alliance (ACAA)

The City was an inaugural member of the ACAA and the group completed a Particulate Matter and Ozone Management Plan in 2008.The document can be viewed at www.capitalairshed.ca

### Idle-Free St. Albert

In March of 2008, Council passed St. Albert's Idle-Free Bylaw, which prohibits vehicles from idling for more than three minutes in a 30-minute period between the temperatures of 0°C and 30°C. Along with the new bylaw, the City launched the "Let's Clear the Air" education and awareness campaign, letting motorists know about the effects of idling and how they can avoid idling their vehicles unnecessarily.

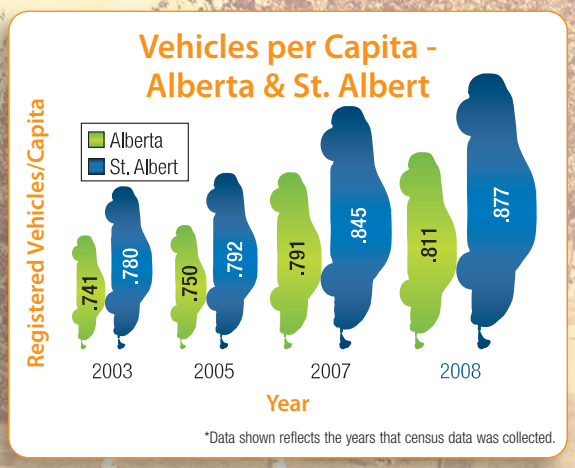
Let's Clear the Air
IDLE-FREE ST. ALBERT

St. Albert was the first municipality in the Capital Region to pass an idling bylaw.

# Reduce Non-Renewable Energy Consumption and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

## Where Are We Now?

The primary sources of greenhouse gases in St. Albert are from the burning of fossil fuels, including coal fired electricity generation, natural gas from home heating and fuels for transportation. This means that the greatest reductions in greenhouse gas emissions will be reached by reducing energy consumption in homes, in vehicles and at work.




*Data shown reflects the years that census data was collected.

St. Albert averages 2.45 cars per household, one of the highest averages in Alberta.

## Where Do We Want To Be?

### Goal: Reduce Non-Renewable Energy Consumption and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Targets:

- Achieve 20% reduction of total corporate greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2020.
- Achieve 6% reduction of total community greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2020.

## How Will We Reach Our Targets?

### Partners for Climate Protection (PCP)

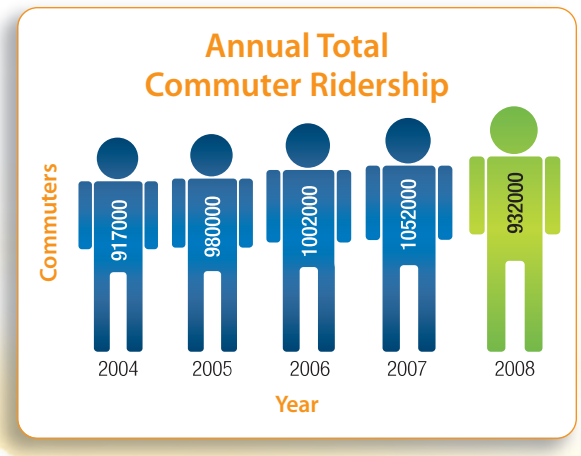
The City will be following the PCP program developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to complete a greenhouse gas inventory for both the corporation and the community. This inventory will provide the baseline for future reduction efforts.

### Green Growth Initiatives

*LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)* - In 2008, construction of Fire Station No. 3 was completed – the building is expected to be the first LEED Gold Certified fire station in the province. LEED is a third party certification program and a nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance "green" buildings.

### Initiatives from Other St. Albert Corporate Plans:

- *Public Transportation* - The number of people travelling by bus between St. Albert and Edmonton (commuter ridership) continues to increase. Commuter ridership rose another 4.98% in 2008, after seeing an increase of 2.3% in 2007.




- *Trail Expansion* – The City received $500,000 for the Erin Ridge/Oakmont Trail Development project, which will add approximately five kilometres of trails in these neighbourhoods.
- *Light Rail Transit in St. Albert* - Work is ongoing with the City of Edmonton and the Capital Region Board to ensure that long-term plans for light rail transit between both cities are aligned.

For an easy way to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions and your impact on the environment, please visit the One Million Acts of Green website at http://green.cbc.ca

### Community, Educational and Incentive Initiatives:

- *U-PASS* – St. Albert Transit continues to participate in the Universal Transit Pass (U-PASS) program, which promotes the use of mass transit to post-secondary students at the University of Alberta and MacEwan College.
- *Project Porchlight* – Through this volunteer program, 18,000 free compact fluorescent light bulbs were distributed to residents. These bulbs last 10 times longer and use 75% less energy than regular incandescent light bulbs.



# We need your input!

## Your Opinion Matters

**For more information or to provide feedback, please contact:**

Office of the Environment
phone: 780-459-1735
email: environment@st-albert.net

www.stalbert.ca

Watch for this logo - it represents all City of St. Albert environmental initiatives.

City of St. Albert Office of Environment Green by nature

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