

TOWN OF STONY PLAIN
COMMUNITY & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

VOLUNTEERISM & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

VOLUNTEER
TREASURE
HUNT



TOWN OF STONY PLAIN COMMUNITY & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
VOLUNTEERISM & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Land Acknowledgement	3
Executive Summary	4
Journey To Date	5
Our Plan.....	6
Guiding Principles	7
Focus Areas, Goals and Key Actions.....	8-12
Recommendations	8-12
Monitoring Success.....	13
Moving Forward	16
In Appreciation	16

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: Background Information.....	18
Who We Are	18
Background.....	18
Aligning Plans, Reports and Strategies.....	19

APPENDIX 2: Engagement Information	20
Public Engagement.....	20
Engagement Process.....	20
What We Heard Report.....	20

APPENDIX 3: Current Volunteer Landscape	22
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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Stony Plain is located on Treaty 6 territory, the traditional meeting grounds, gathering space, and travel route of the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Dene and Nakota Sioux and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

The Town of Stony Plain respectfully acknowledges all the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities whose footsteps have marked this landscape since time immemorial.

We acknowledge the deeply rooted relationships between Indigenous heritage, culture, language, spirituality, and history to Stony Plain's land, water and air. We thank the many past, present, and future Indigenous groups who have protected and thrived in this environment for millennia. We acknowledge all Nations, who live, work, and play on this land and who honour and celebrate this land.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Stony Plain is committed to creating a connected and vibrant community that embraces the future while enriching the lives of its residents. Our vision is to cultivate a strong, healthy, and connected community where everyone feels a sense of belonging. To achieve this vision, we have developed a comprehensive strategy focused on increasing community participation and connecting individuals to diverse and inclusive volunteer opportunities.

This strategy serves as a formal starting point for Stony Plain to promote well being and healthy communities by fostering conditions for volunteerism and civic engagement. By advancing volunteerism, we aim to nurture connection, community, and belonging among our residents of all ages.

Key actions include:

- Establishing a formal strategy to guide our efforts.
- Nourishing well being and healthy communities through volunteerism and civic engagement.
- Promoting community wellness by providing connection opportunities and support for residents.

Four overarching focus areas with accompanying goals have been developed to guide volunteerism and civic engagement within Stony Plain.



FOCUS AREA: OPPORTUNITIES

GOAL:
Increase community participation by connecting people to diverse and inclusive volunteer opportunities.



FOCUS AREA: COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

GOAL:
Foster leadership development within our community.



FOCUS AREA: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY NOURISHING

GOAL:
Build volunteerism capacity of organizations through leadership and expertise in volunteer engagement and management.



FOCUS AREA: ENHANCING AWARENESS

GOAL:
Raise the profile of Volunteer Services within the community, and further promote volunteerism and civic engagement.

Implementation will involve collaboration with key stakeholders and partners to develop specific programs and initiatives. We will track progress and regularly evaluate the strategy's effectiveness, adapting as needed to meet evolving community needs.

This strategy is a tool that can advance our thriving community through increasing opportunities for residents to actively participate and contribute to the process of building community.

"The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves." – HELEN KELLER



JOURNEY TO DATE

1997

VOLUNTEER CENTRE IS BORN

- Promoting volunteering and citizen engagement
- Connecting people with opportunities to volunteer
- Building the capacity of organizations to engage volunteers
- Providing leadership on issues relating to volunteering and citizen engagement

2022

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

2023

WHAT WE HEARD LAUNCHED

2024

VOLUNTEERISM AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

"Every person can make a difference, and every person should try." – JOHN F. KENNEDY

OUR PLAN

The Town of Stony Plain is committed to creating a connected and vibrant community that embraces the future while enriching the lives of its residents.

Our vision is to cultivate a strong, healthy, and connected community where everyone feels a sense of belonging. To achieve this vision, we have developed a comprehensive strategy focused on increasing community participation and connecting individuals to diverse and inclusive volunteer opportunities.

The value of volunteering is critical to easing loneliness, addressing social challenges and creating a strong, more connected community.

When considering the value of volunteering, it is important to recognize that the volunteer sector does not just deliver services, it makes a huge economic impact.

According to *Imagine Canada*, charities and nonprofits add about 8.3% or \$192 billion to Canada’s GDP. That is almost as much as the financial services sector (3.6% or \$70 billion, as of September 2023) and oil and gas (6.4% or \$139.2 billion as per StatsCan data, 2019) sectors combined. Volunteers are present in many more places than just charities and non profits. In every community, volunteers step up to help with local events, run sports teams and support the things they care about like training to be on local Search and Rescue or informally, like shoveling a neighbour’s driveway.¹ The *Value of Volunteering Wheel* illustrates the many benefits of volunteering to building confidence, competence, connections and community.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Stony Plain believes that volunteer involvement has a powerful impact on our society, community, organizations, and individuals.

Volunteer involvement is fundamental to a healthy and democratic society in Canada.²

It promotes civic engagement and active participation in shaping society.

- It encourages everyone to play a role and contribute to the quality of life in communities.

Volunteer involvement is vital for strong and connected communities.

- It promotes change and development through the collective efforts of those who know the community best.
- It identifies and supports local strengths and assets to respond to community challenges while strengthening the social fabric.

Volunteer involvement builds the capacity of organizations.

- It provides organizations with the skills, talents and perspectives that are essential to their relevance, vitality and sustainability.
- It increases the capacity of organizations to accomplish their goals through programs and services that respond to and are reflective of the unique characteristics and needs of their communities.

Volunteer involvement is personal.

- It promotes a sense of belonging and general well being.
- It provides the opportunity for individuals to engage according to their personal preferences, interests, skills and motivations.

Volunteering is about nourishing relationships.

- It connects people to the causes they care about and allows community outcomes and personal goals to be met within a spectrum of engagement.
- It creates opportunities for non-profit organizations to accomplish their goals by engaging and involving volunteers, and it allows volunteers an opportunity to connect with and contribute to building community.



FOCUS AREAS, GOALS, & KEY ACTIONS

The strategy is guided by four principle areas:

- **OPPORTUNITIES**
- **COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP**
- **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY NOURISHING**
- **AWARENESS**

A goal has been developed under each of these four principles. Each goal is derived from other municipal and regional strategies, reports, and plans with consideration for the current and forecasted volunteer environment. The goals provide the municipality with directed areas of emphasis to achieve enhanced volunteerism and civic engagement within our community.

Under each goal, key actions have been developed that when implemented will move the strategy forward. The actions were developed based on direction from other plans and department priorities, public feedback, and stakeholder engagement.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The next section presents an overview of the recommended actions with the following high level timeline:

Implementation Timeline

- | | | |
|-------------|----------|---------------------|
| Short Term | S | – in the first year |
| Medium Term | M | – 2-3 years |
| Long Term | L | – 4-5 years |

FOCUS AREA:

OPPORTUNITIES

GOAL #1:

Increase community participation by connecting people to diverse and inclusive volunteer opportunities.



#	ACTION ITEM	TIMELINE
I.1	Improve and enhance the Volunteer Impact database, working to ensure the database is an accurate representation of the region's volunteer and community involvement opportunities.	S
I.1a	Re-structure the Volunteer Impact database to highlight youth, family, and group opportunities; special events; and flexible/adaptable opportunities, in addition to the areas of interest currently listed.	S
I.2	Facilitate the expansion of opportunities to volunteer and get involved in the community at a municipal level by creating flexibility within roles offered.	M
I.2a	Where appropriate, enhance accessibility and create more flexibility within roles, such as transportation and childcare.	M
I.2b	Work with organizations to extend the flexibility of roles beyond the municipality, ensuring the region is a place of vast and diverse opportunities to volunteer and get involved in community.	M
I.2c	Determine the need to provide organizational training about customization and structuring of opportunities to enhance accessibility and flexibility within roles.	S
I.3	Foster youth engagement by collaborating with youth groups, youth-serving organizations, and schools to provide programming and information that would empower youth to volunteer.	S
I.4	Work directly with marginalized groups to foster the development of inclusive opportunities that address accessibility concerns.	L



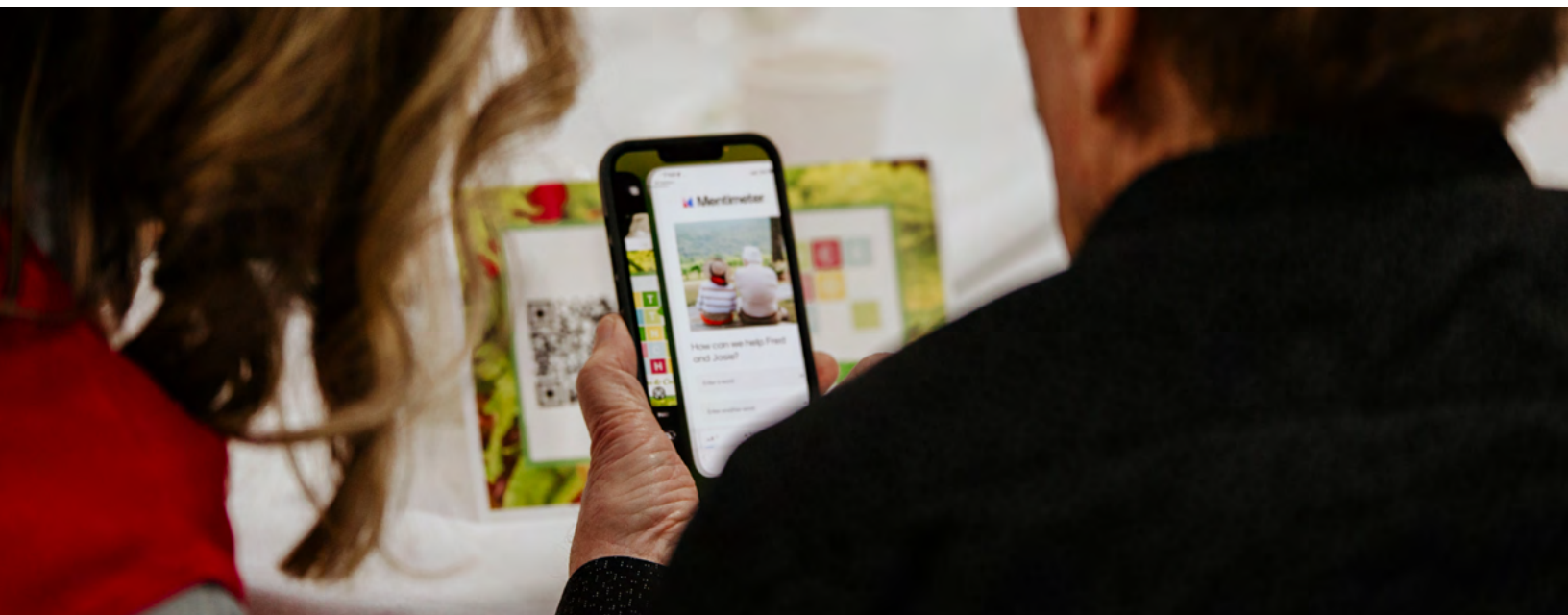
FOCUS AREA:

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

GOAL #2:

Foster leadership development within our community.

#	ACTION ITEM	TIMELINE
2.1	Develop a comprehensive leadership training program for volunteers whereby a cohort of volunteers hone and develop specialized skillsets, foster leadership and enhance knowledge.	L
2.2	Facilitate the expansion of opportunities to volunteer and get involved in the community at a municipal level by creating flexibility within roles offered.	M
2.3	Expand the Neighbourhood Connect program, providing training, support, and guidance to neighbourhood leaders to enhance connection and belonging at a neighbourhood level.	M
2.4	Provide youth-specific volunteer programs so youth can develop leadership abilities, learn new skills, interact with others, and increase employability via volunteering.	S



FOCUS AREA:

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY NOURISHING

GOAL #3:

Build the volunteerism capacity of organizations through our leadership and expertise in volunteer engagement and management.



#	ACTION ITEM	TIMELINE
3.1	Host regular sessions with leaders of volunteers from organizations in the Tri Municipal Region. The purpose of these sessions would be to share successes/achievements, enhance collaboration, build capacity, discuss challenges, share resources, and communicate future initiatives.	S
3.2	Review and refine the municipal volunteer program to include recruitment, training, recognition, and evaluation, including the development of standardized materials, resources, and processes to support internal staff in enhancing volunteerism.	S
3.2a	Explore the need to define the differences between volunteers, paid staff, and contractors. Consider the development of clear guidelines for municipality and/or organizations for when an individual should be a paid staff rather than a volunteer, and any related processes.	L
3.2b	Tailor the resources and materials developed in 3.2 to extend to community organizations, including easily accessible and editable templates.	M
3.2c	Based on the recommendations resulting from 3.2a, share learnings and resources with community organizations to consider adopting as organizational practice.	L
3.3	Host workshops for municipal staff and Tri Municipal Region organizations that offer guidance on structuring roles to create accessible, flexible, and inclusive opportunities to volunteer.	S
3.4	Host regular training sessions for leaders of volunteers aimed at expanding knowledge, developing skills, and addressing local challenges and barriers.	S

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?”

– MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR



FOCUS AREA:

ENHANCING AWARENESS

GOAL #4:

Raise the profile of Volunteer Services within the community, and further promote volunteerism and civic engagement.

#	ACTION ITEM	TIMELINE
4.1	Improve and expand the Volunteer Impact database.	S
4.1a	Include information about the database and how to access it in all Volunteer Services promotional materials.	S
4.1b	Consider offering regular training sessions: targeting volunteers to teach them how to use the database and to municipal staff to expand municipal capacity of the site.	S
4.2	Develop messaging and a two-pronged targeted awareness campaign highlighting the Volunteer Impact database and its benefits to both individuals and organizations.	S
4.3	Communicate and promote the benefits of volunteering and civic engagement through a coordinated public relations campaign.	S
4.3a	Consider the development of tailored messaging to specific volunteer groups such as youth, families, and seniors.	S
4.4	Host volunteer recruitment and networking opportunities for residents, fostering the ability of organizations and residents to connect.	S
4.4a	Enhance youth engagement, host targeted recruitment sessions for youth, where participating organizations and youth have the chance to discuss opportunities available and determine suitability prior to entering into the application process.	S

MONITORING SUCCESS

The Volunteerism and Civic Engagement Strategic Plan is a five-year plan that identifies new and ongoing initiatives that will enhance volunteerism and civic engagement in Stony Plain. This strategy aspires to meet the ever-growing needs of the community. As the community grows towards its anticipated goal of 30,000 residents, it is the intention that the Strategy will be revisited every 3-5 years for re-evaluation. The Town of Stony Plain will continue to engage community members to seek and receive ongoing input to ensure the Strategy is reflective of the community needs and that diverse communities are continually seen, heard, and included.



Progress will be monitored through regular updates via municipal reporting mechanisms and comparison of annual statistics year over year.

Using outcomes and indicators established, data will be collected after activities and reported in the annual report to measure progress on the Volunteerism and Civic Engagement Strategic Plan. Community engagement plans will be created to ensure inclusive public participation for review of the work on a regular basis with a full strategy review every five years.

- Annually report on survey response, focused conversations and include anecdotal stories and comments.
- Conduct an environmental scan, audits and community engagement in year two.
- Complete an evaluation of the strategy in year five.

Possible approaches for monitoring and reporting on success could include:

- Convene focus groups with diverse communities to obtain a first-hand account of their needs.
- Engaging with community to discuss issues important to them.
- Participate and contribute to regional, provincial, federal, and international communities of practice for shared knowledge and experience.



OUTCOMES

Three outcomes and associated indicators have been identified to measure progress with increasing volunteerism and civic engagement. The outcomes and indicators reflect language adopted in the Uniquely Stony Plain: Municipal Development Plan, 2024-2027 Stony Plain Strategy and 2024-2026 Stony Plain Corporate Plan:

Improved social well being of community
<p>OUTCOME 1: COMMUNITY IS CONNECTED AND ENGAGED</p> <p>INDICATOR: Community members report positive attitudes toward others and the community.</p> <p>INDICATOR: Community members report there is diverse range of activities individuals can participate in for their own enjoyment/benefit or to provide benefit to others in the wider community.</p>
Improved social well being of individuals
<p>OUTCOME 2: COMMUNITY MEMBERS EXPERIENCE PERSONAL WELL BEING</p> <p>INDICATOR: Community members report meaning and purpose; the extent to which people feel that what they do in life is valuable, worthwhile, and valued by others.</p>
<p>OUTCOME 3: COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE CONNECTED WITH OTHERS</p> <p>INDICATOR: Community members report an increase in the quality of social relationships; how people experience their connections with others and the strength of those relationships.</p> <p>INDICATOR: Diverse community members feel respected and a sense of belonging.</p> <p>INDICATOR: People’s experiences of trusting other people, being treated fairly and respectfully by them, and feeling a sense of belonging with and support from people.</p>

The implementation of this strategy will require the cultivation of partnerships to collaboratively accomplish initiatives. However, overall success will not occur without support from the whole community.





MOVING FORWARD

Each year, community members generously give of their time and talents. They contribute to community connectedness, enhance civic engagement, and support the delivery of high-quality community programs, initiatives, and events. The key focus areas, goals and associated actions outlined in this document will help support community members and organizations and build on the leadership and neighbourliness that is embedded within our community. This Strategy details a framework to follow to help ensure volunteerism and civic engagement continues to thrive and grow in Stony Plain well into the future.

This strategy serves as a formal starting point, signaling Stony Plain's commitment to nurturing the well being and fostering healthy, connected communities. Achieving this ambitious goal necessitates the shared responsibility of all stakeholders, including community members, organizations, and the Town of Stony Plain. In essence, the success of this strategy hinges on collaborative efforts from all involved.

In its entirety, the Volunteerism and Civic Engagement Strategy effectively communicates the collective intention to cultivate a vibrant, inclusive community. Together, we can weave the fabric of a connected community, one that faces the future with optimism and resilience.

IN APPRECIATION

Our community strategy owes its success to the invaluable input from our residents and community organizations. We extend our deepest gratitude to all who participated in the public engagement process. Let's keep building together. Questions, reflections, and suggestions to this strategy are always welcome. Help us grow our connected community at connect@stonyplain.com.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1:

Background Information

Who We Are

Background

Aligning Plans, Reports
and Strategies

APPENDIX 2:

Engagement Information

Public Engagement

Engagement Process

What We Heard Report

APPENDIX 3:

Current Volunteer
Landscape



APPENDIX 1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

WHO WE ARE

Stony Plain is a vibrant and strong community! We are building a community where we can grow up and grow old.



Stony Plain was founded over 100 years ago as a service centre for the surrounding agricultural lands and has grown to become a community with a rich cultural heritage, a dynamic and growing population and forward-looking vision. Located on Treaty Six Territory just west of the City of Edmonton and a growing population of nearly 18,000 residents.

BACKGROUND

The Stony Plain Volunteer Centre initiative, supported by Stony Plain Community and Social Development was created in 1997. The Volunteer Centre strengthens volunteering and citizen engagement in the community which contributes to a healthy and resilient community. The Volunteer Centre has carried out activities in four core areas:

- Promoting volunteering and citizen engagement
- Connecting people with opportunities to volunteer
- Building the capacity of organizations to engage volunteers
- Providing leadership on issues relating to volunteering and citizen engagement

In 2022, the Volunteer Centre celebrated 25 years of supporting volunteers in our community. This milestone anniversary presented an opportune time to review and refine our operations and develop a strategy best poised to help support civic engagement and volunteerism in our community for years to come.

Enhancing our civic engagement efforts as a community is a collaborative effort and requires the contributions of many. This strategy is the cumulation of collective effort, and wouldn't be possible without the contributions of community, partners, and stakeholders who shared their ideas, experiences, and recommendations to enhance community belonging, civic engagement and volunteerism throughout the Tri Municipal Region. Internally, community involvement and volunteerism are crucial to the successful implementation of many Stony Plain plans, events, and programs; internal feedback was provided to aid in the development of this plan.

The valuable insight and feedback provided resulted in the development of a truly community-focused volunteer plan. The Volunteerism and Civic Engagement Strategy provides direction for the future, with consideration of the current volunteer landscape and is closely aligned with municipal and regional plans.

ALIGNING PLANS, REPORTS AND STRATEGIES

Enhancing volunteerism is truly a community effort. It is important to develop our plan with a solid understanding of how it fits in the larger strategic picture and initiatives of our Town and Region.

Town of Stony Plain Municipal Development Plan

The Municipal Development Plan is a vision for the future. It is a 20-year outlook for residents, describing the community we want to be. A review of the Municipal Development Plan took place in 2020³.

Town of Stony Plain Strategic Plan

2024-2027 Council’s Strategic Plan for Stony Plain guides their work for the next four years. Their commitment is to learn, adapt and introduce a new iteration of the Strategic Plan annually and continue looking beyond this timeline. Keeping a future focus is critical to allocating resources and ensuring the vision is supported⁴.

Town of Stony Plain Corporate Plan

The team at the Town of Stony Plain are responsible for day-to-day operations and delivering on priority projects, helping the community achieve its vision. Each year, a Corporate Plan is created to align work, allocate resources, and ensure progress is measured⁵.

In the last several years, valuable work beyond the aforementioned plans has also been completed at a municipal level. In 2018, a Mayor’s Task Force⁶ was convened, examining community engagement and volunteerism. Building off the great work of the 2018 task force, and as a mechanism to address community resilience amid the Covid 19 Pandemic, a Mayor’s Task Force for Community Resiliency⁷ was established. Both task forces produced a report with many recommendations that closely align to volunteerism and civic engagement within our community. Such recommendations were critical components as the key actions of the strategy were developed.

Tri Municipal Regional Plan⁸

In 2021, Parkland County, the City of Spruce Grove and the Town of Stony Plain collaborated to develop a Tri Municipal Regional Plan to improve governance, service delivery, fiscal capacity, and economic prosperity across the region in areas of: economic development; transportation, utilities, and infrastructure; preferred land use scenario; competitiveness review; social development; cultural; recreation; and housing needs assessment and strategy. As regional plans progress and are confirmed, the Town of Stony Plain will monitor to seek alignment where possible.

This Strategy supports the objectives within the various municipal and regional strategies and plans. It lays the foundation for enhanced volunteerism and civic engagement into the future.



APPENDIX 2

ENGAGEMENT INFORMATION

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Community and Social Development hosted engagement sessions in the winter of 2023 to gather feedback from residents and organizations within the Tri Municipal Region. The sessions were an opportunity to learn what is important to the public in building and strengthening community and volunteerism and illuminate the state of volunteerism within the Tri Municipal Region. The information, feedback and perspectives gathered through the engagement process helped to inform the key components of the Volunteerism and Civic Engagement Strategy.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

A comprehensive, two-phased, public engagement plan was developed to ensure the public had an opportunity to provide feedback and input at multiple points throughout the Strategy development. This valuable insight and feedback shaped the development of the Strategy, helping to ensure the development of a community-focused Volunteerism and Civic Engagement.

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

The What We Heard Report was released in 2023 and is a comprehensive review of the public engagement hosted to guide the development of the volunteerism and civic engagement strategy. Throughout the engagement process, several recommendations were suggested to enhance volunteerism and civic engagement throughout the region. The information, feedback and perspectives gathered through the engagement process helped inform the development of the Volunteerism and Civic Engagement Strategy. Specifically, what was heard was used to affirm, and where needed refine, goals, and is directly reflected in the key actions intended to advance the strategy. The voices of community will continue to shape volunteerism and civic engagement throughout Stony Plain for years to come.





Summary of Recommendations from 2023 WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Increase Youth Volunteering and Community Involvement

- Consider developing group roles where friends or families can volunteer together
- Create opportunities that aid in the development of skills and leadership
- Host recruitment sessions with youth
- Advertise for roles in places youth frequent

Increase Family Volunteering and Community Involvement

- Intentionally create family-friendly opportunities
- Develop family-friendly roles that appeal to children and youth and take into consideration timing and duties
- Develop messaging that is tailored to families to raise awareness of opportunities available

Enhance Awareness

- Improve the central volunteer database and raise its profile
- Use a diverse range of communication mechanisms
- Tailor communications to volunteer groups

Create Welcoming and Accessible Spaces

- Provide orientation
- Foster a friendly, welcoming and respectful culture
- Ensure access to role-appropriate tools
- Develop comprehensive training programs

Support Attraction and Retention

- Set clear expectations: develop detailed role descriptions
- Streamline and tailor application processes
- Explore opportunities to create flexible positions
- Celebrate successes and show appreciation

Develop Organizational Resources and Supports

- Promotion of volunteer opportunities
- Regional training and leadership sessions for volunteers
- Volunteer handbooks and templates
- Access to resources that cover common volunteer issues and challenges
- Training and networking opportunities for leaders of volunteers
- Continuation of Tri-Municipal Region volunteer appreciation events
- Board specific resources and support

The chart summarizes the recommendations, and further details are available in the Volunteerism and Civic Engagement What We Heard Report⁹.

APPENDIX 3

CURRENT VOLUNTEER LANDSCAPE



In 2018, Statistics Canada completed the *General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating*, which was conducted on a sample of Canadians 15 years and older. The survey data provides valuable insights into volunteerism opportunities and challenges¹⁰. The findings from the study can help shape the path forward for the overall volunteer sector, and in turn, the Stony Plain Volunteerism and Civic Engagement Strategy.

2018 was the first cycle of the survey that explored frequencies of formal and informal volunteering among Canadians. **Formal volunteering** includes activities conducted without pay on behalf of a group or organization. These opportunities are mediated by organizations and examples can include organizing an event, sitting on a board, and fundraising. **Informal volunteering** includes activities conducted without pay not on behalf of a group or organization¹¹. Examples include volunteers assisting in their neighbourhoods¹², helping relatives outside the household, and providing direct help to the community without involvement of an organization or group¹³.

The natural tendency of volunteers to participate in both formal and informal opportunities is an important factor when shaping the volunteerism strategy. A commonality among all generations was contributing to the well being of the community¹⁴. In the implementation of the strategy, careful consideration of the motivation of volunteers is crucial to help craft a rewarding and enriching engagement experience.

LOCAL LANDSCAPE

The results from the Volunteering and Community Involvement Survey¹⁵ conducted in early 2023 help to paint the picture of the local volunteerism and civic engagement landscape.

NATIONAL RATES

In 2018, approximately **79% of Canadians** aged 15 years or older volunteered.

Specifically:

6% formal volunteering only

38% informal volunteering only

35% combined informal and formal volunteering

Hours contributed equal to approximately **2.5 million** full-time jobs¹⁶

ALBERTA RATES

In 2018, approximately **82% of Albertans** aged 15 years or older volunteered.

Specifically:

4% formal volunteering only

37% informal volunteering only

41% combined informal and formal volunteering

While not regionally-specific data, this data can help to shape the Stony Plain strategy¹⁷.



INDIVIDUALS

Much like national results, residents through the Tri Municipal Region are involved in the community in many ways and choose to volunteer both formally and informally. It is important to structure the strategy to meet the needs of those volunteering on behalf of an organization as well as those helping at more grassroots, neighbourhood levels. Another consideration is the motivation of residents to volunteer or get involved in community. A significant portion of survey respondents indicated their motivation to volunteer or get involved in community is to help others, gain leadership skills, general skill development, to help bring about change and to get to know community. When attempting to enhance volunteerism and civic engagement, it is necessary to structure opportunities to match the motivations of the Tri-Region community.

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF VOLUNTEERING

90% of community respondents assessed their current level of volunteering as either just right or indicated they would like to increase the amount of time they spend volunteering. Additionally, 79% of respondents indicated their commitment to volunteering has either not changed or increased over the last two years. This suggests that throughout the Tri Municipal Region, there is a strong sense of engagement, and a strong base from which to call upon volunteers.

However, there is an interesting mix among current volunteers in terms of satisfaction. In the last two years, 39% of respondents indicated the satisfaction from volunteering has not changed. Interestingly, 26% of respondents indicated their satisfaction has increased, with an equal number indicating the satisfaction from volunteering has decreased. This highlights the need to match individuals with well-suited roles and ensure volunteers and those that are involved in community are recognized and appreciated.

BARRIERS

When developing key actions of the strategy, careful consideration was given to the barriers residents are facing to volunteerism and community involvement. Key actions were formulated to aid in the reduction of barriers to enhance civic engagement across the Tri Municipal Region.

For those respondents who are not currently involved in community or volunteering, the barriers and challenges cited included time and the need for flexibility in scheduling and roles, accommodating work schedules, finding roles that resonate with personal interests, and the difficulty connecting and integrating in a new community. Similarly, even those who are currently volunteering, cited much of the same barriers to volunteerism and community involvement. Time, flexibility in scheduling of roles, and ability to accommodate individuals with work, family and personal commitments were barriers frequently identified by respondents.

With the understanding of the barriers commonly faced locally, it is important to structure opportunities for involvement that are flexible, allowing for differing shifts, with varying methods of deployment such as virtual roles, and adaptable times of service.

A lack of awareness about what is out there and how to find the opportunities was detailed as a barrier many times by community respondents. A central space to access information about community involvement and volunteer roles available was considered critical among respondents to reducing the awareness barrier. The use of as many promotional mediums as possible can help enhance awareness among many different groups throughout the community. This extends beyond social media, to mediums such as websites, personalized emails, newspaper, radio, community bulletin boards, and advertisements in common community spaces such as grocery stores, schools, and recreation centres.

It is essential to ensure information is easily accessible to enhance awareness of opportunities available throughout the Tri Municipal Region.

Community respondents also expressed challenges with clarity of roles, expectations of the individuals in the roles, and lack of training as barriers often encountered throughout the region. Development of comprehensive training programs for volunteers is an opportunity to reduce some of the barriers encountered. Additionally, ensuring clarity and expectations for roles prior to starting is paramount to ensuring a suitable fit. This includes clear job descriptions, guidelines around schedules and shifts, as well as potential meet and greets. Key actions that not only support residents, but also organizations, in reducing these barriers are essential to enhancing civic engagement through the Tri Municipal Region.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Leaders of volunteers within local organizations provided feedback that help depict the current realities of community and volunteerism throughout the Tri Municipal Region from an organizational perspective.

95% of organization respondents indicated that volunteers are either very critical or somewhat critical to the operation of their organization. Additionally, over the last two years, many local organizations have seen a significant increase in the demand for their organization's programs or services (55%). At the same time, for most organizations, the amount of people contacting their organization to volunteer has either remained steady or decreased.

This highlights a need to enhance awareness about volunteer and community involvement opportunities available, as regionally, residents have expressed a strong desire to help.

Organizations reported several volunteer-related challenges facing their organization, with the top challenges being difficulty recruiting new volunteers, dealing with the loss of volunteers, and difficulty attracting board members. Additionally, regional organizations have indicated that volunteering has changed at their organization over the last two years, most commonly with the development of new volunteer roles, expansion of volunteering due to increased demand, and the re-engagement of volunteers.

Tri Municipal Region organizations anticipate seeing the need for volunteers in a variety of capacities in the next two years, including governance, fundraising, program support, admin roles, special events, customer service, mentoring youth, cleaning, and maintenance, technical and operations.



In consideration for the shifting volunteer landscape within the Tri Municipal Region, organizations indicated several valuable supports and resources needed to help advance volunteerism. This includes promotion of volunteering opportunities, volunteer management resources, raising awareness about volunteer engagement issues, sharing of information and updates, and training. The formation of key actions that account for the changing landscape, as well as address the needed organizational supports will help to enhance civic engagement and volunteerism throughout the region.







ENDNOTES

- 1 National Volunteer Action Strategy: [It's Time: Volunteer Canada: English Volunteer Canada Case for Support.pdf](#)
- 2 The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement: [Volunteer Canada Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement 2017.pdf](#)
- 3 Uniquely Stony Plain, Municipal Development Plan 2020, [https://www.stonyplain.com/en/town-hall/resources/SP_MDP_Nov22_2019_Website.pdf](#)
- 4 Town of Stony Plain, Strategic Plan, 2021: [https://www.stonyplain.com/en/town-hall/resources/Documents/2021-2024-Strategic-Plan.pdf](#)
- 5 Town of Stony Plain, Corporate Plan, 2022: [https://www.stonyplain.com/en/town-hall/resources/Documents/Corporate-Plan-2022-2024.pdf](#)
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