



St. Albert Tourism Master Plan

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INTRODUCTION

In 2001-02, a sub committee of the St. Albert Economic Development Advisory Committee (SAEDAC) began discussing a strategic framework for developing tourism in St. Albert and since that time, a number of steps have unfolded. Key among these were two commissioned studies – conducted by Dawn Ringrose and Associates in 2004 and 2005 – and a 2005 stakeholders workshop. The St. Albert Tourism Advisory Committee, now called the SEE St. Albert Committee, was formed as a result of that workshop. The committee has drawn extensively from the two studies for the vision, objectives and supporting information that comprise the St. Albert Tourism Master Plan (SATMP).

Much in the fashion of the City of St. Albert Economic Development Master Plan, the SATMP articulates a long range, high-level vision and key objectives for tourism in St. Albert. It establishes a focus for current and future tourism activities, justification and the strategies required to increase tourism in ways that complement the quality of life of St. Albert's residents without compromising it. These objectives will need further advancement by Business and Tourism Development through its long-term department plan, providing specific measurable goals with time frames and costs.

The City of St. Albert uses a planning hierarchy that requires all master plans and strategies to be aligned with statutory plans and policies. The SATMP will fit into this hierarchy and align with the relevant plans and policies. It is not a business case, and thus makes no attempt to forecast costs and timelines. With this report, Administration and the SEE St. Albert Committee are seeking City Council's *approval* of the Tourism Master Plan.

THE NEED FOR A TOURISM MASTER PLAN

Tourism as an Economic Development Driver

In 2004, there were 4.3 million visits to Edmonton and its surrounding area for the purposes of business or pleasure; Canadians made 88 per cent of these visits, with Albertans accounting for 68 per cent of the total. Sixty-eight per cent of the visits were overnight. In total, visitors to the region spent **\$1.03 billion** [<http://www.alberta-canada.com/statpub/tourismStatistics>].

It's plain to see that tourism is a proven driver for economic development in Alberta and for the capital region. As part of this region, and placed next to a potential day-trip market of about one million residents, St. Albert is ideally positioned to take advantage of the potent promise for economic development offered by tourism. As a growth industry, tourism is incorporated into St. Albert's Municipal Development Plan and its Economic Development Master Plan.

The Current Situation in St. Albert

The SEE St. Albert Committee used a variety of inputs to distinguish seven significant tourism sectors wherein lie opportunities for St. Albert. After reviewing the Ringrose reports,

the committee conducted a brainstorming process and formed sub-committees representing tourism interest groups to identify new tourism opportunities and to validate the consultants report. Through these activities, the committee identified the following sectors:

- Heritage tourism
- Arts and culture tourism
- Agricultural tourism
- Festival and event tourism
- Nature tourism
- Sport tourism
- Downtown tourism

Relevant to these seven sectors, St. Albert has the following assets

- Mission Hill
- Servus Credit Union Place (multi-use sports facility)
- Selected heritage assets, including the Grain Elevator Park and Train Station
- St. Albert Place (theatre and heritage museum)
- The Michif Cultural and Interpretive Centre
- Practising artisans (e.g., potters, papermakers, painters and other visual artists)
- Successful festivals and visual and performing arts events
- An appealing summer-long farmers' market in the downtown core
- A range of food and beverage facilities targeted at different market segments
- An aesthetic downtown and periphery bordering the Sturgeon River
- The Red Willow Park System
- Communities boasting a mix of attractions within a very short drive to the north and east
- A wide range of established visitor attractions in Edmonton, just a half hour to the south.

There are also significant plans to expand tourism assets in St. Albert and the region. These include: The Big Lake Wetlands Interpretive Centre, development of the Lois Hole Provincial Park and the Riel Recreation area.

These assets can support tourism growth for St. Albert, but there are some current challenges as well. The Ringrose study named accommodation as a significant issue. As of 2004, there were only 226 hotel rooms in the community, the majority of which are in the St. Albert Inn and budget motel establishments [Ringrose, *Strategy*, p. 3]. Some progress has been made in this area with the recently announced 48 room addition to St. Albert Inn. The SEE St. Albert Committee has identified other issues as well. Community sports facilities need upgrading to national standards if they are to stage large tournaments, and the Sturgeon River and its valley are deteriorating and require maintenance, reclamation and development. If St. Albert is to become a tourism destination, these issues must be addressed.

THE VISION

To make the most of its assets and opportunities, and to address the aforementioned constraints, the city needs a vision for tourism and a strategy for bringing that vision into reality. Hence, the following vision is proposed:

A defined focus on tourism within St. Albert's planned economy that results in:

- enhanced downtown, riverfront, heritage, arts, culture, sports, natural areas and agricultural tourism assets;
- increased economic development opportunities; and,
- improved quality of life for residents that is complemented, not compromised, by tourism.

To make this vision a reality, St. Albert needs a master plan for tourism!

OBJECTIVES

The St. Albert Tourism Master Plan is built around the following objectives. They are ranked in order of priority:

1. Further vitalize the downtown area.
2. Promote current and future tourist attractions and events.
3. Develop the Sturgeon River valley and downtown riverfront.
4. Develop new tourist attractions and events, and enhance existing ones.
5. Maintain and upgrade existing sport facilities and the Red Willow Park system
6. Increase visitor options for accommodations.
7. Create a tourism brand for St. Albert (based on a community assessment process).
8. Seek financial support from all levels of government for implementing the St. Albert Tourism Master Plan (this objective supports the preceding seven).

OBJECTIVE 1: FURTHER VITALIZE THE DOWNTOWN AREA

Findings for Objective 1

In the *St. Albert Community Tourism Strategy* of 2004, Dawn Ringrose and Associates identified an exceptional tourism resource that distinguishes St. Albert: its downtown riverfront location, with links to the Sturgeon River valley, the Red Willow Park system and Lois Hole Provincial Park (including Big Lake). The confluence of these natural assets and their connection with the city's historic downtown core offer a major tourism development opportunity; one that can have strong visitor appeal.

Modern planning practices have proven the value in designing downtown and urban riverfront

areas as “places for people” [Ringrose, *Strategy*, p. 24]. This serves not only to bring more residents into these areas, but also to lure visitors by delivering quality experiences for tourists (such as a colourful street scene, stimulating events, outdoor cafes, attractive signage, etc.).

Vitalization efforts are already underway as the downtown core has already been designated as an Arts and Heritage District by City Council and linked with the City’s long-term plans. It only makes sense to continue making downtown vitalization as our top tourism development priority.

Suggested strategies – Objective 1

Downtown development should take into account the city’s historic theme, but not be bound by it. The primary objective should be to create a pedestrian and visitor-friendly area with buildings on a human scale, and an environment with a heritage flavour, lots of colour and animation, and the space and pace for walking.

High priority strategies

- Redevelop St. Albert Place as a cultural centre. It could include, for example, a children’s gallery, expanded art studios and a gift shop. The library and the Arden Theatre should continue to be key features in the complex.
- Improve the downtown core with attractive, consistent signage; architectural controls and zoning that ensures a business mix conducive to further vitalization (i.e., retail spaces on ground floors, professional spaces on upper floors; service- and amenity-type businesses).
- Clean up and improve the riverfront area consistent with other downtown improvements.
- Explore other downtown locations or buildings that might house a museum (including interpretive pavilions for women, children, agriculture, and aboriginal and Métis culture).

Other strategies

- Create an overarching, long-term vision for downtown St. Albert that drives all future planning for the area.
- Revitalize Founder’s Walk
- Monitor and align downtown vitalization plans with the proposed Business Revitalization Zone Plan.
- Work consistently with stakeholders to ensure their buy-in on further downtown revitalization.
- Develop a tourism awareness communications program.
- Ensure that St. Albert Place renovations serve to reorient the building in the direction of the river. Encourage privately owned buildings in the area to follow suit.
- Relocate the St. Albert Visitors’ Centre to the downtown area.

- Animate downtown with a detailed plan for banners, lighting, floral decorations and an expanded street performers program.
- Upgrade downtown traffic flow to support and enhance pedestrian traffic over vehicular traffic, emphasizing linkages to the proposed Business Revitalization Zone, Mission Hill, St. Albert Place, the Red Willow Park system, the Sturgeon River valley and Lois Hole Provincial Park.
- Establish a shuttle service to link tourism amenities, with particular emphasis on park and ride services to bring people into the downtown core, where parking is at a premium.
- Develop effective, long-term solutions to downtown parking shortages.
- Strategically schedule special events and activities in the downtown core (such as the Farmer's Market, Rock'n August and Art Walks) to ensure they generate maximum economic benefit.

Time investments – Objective 1

Phase 1 (one to two years):

- Create and articulate a long term vision for further downtown vitalization.
- Execute “quick wins” (tasks requiring minimal time and budgets) such as downtown animation and signage improvements.

Phases 2 and 3 (five to ten years):

- Implement the long term vision.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROMOTE CURRENT AND FUTURE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND EVENTS

Findings for Objective 2

E-marketing is the most significant trend in tourism in the past decade. By 2002, more than 55 per cent of Canadians and 65 per cent of Americans were researching their travel plans on the Internet [Ringrose, *Strategy*, p. 42]. The rapid growth of Alberta's capital region has placed an immediate audience of about one million people right at St. Albert's doorstep. That audience, which is a potential market group, can be expanded exponentially with e-marketing.

The City of Edmonton attracts a significant number of visitors; St. Albert should actively market themselves to these visitors and encourage them to include St. Albert in their travel itineraries.

The huge potential for an expanded tourism market coincides with the endorsement of the Heritage Sites Master Plan, which will only increase the tourism products that St. Albert can market. By promoting these new products (together with its existing ones) to ever-expanding markets, St. Albert can bring substantial economic benefits to the community and raise its profile as a special place for residents and visitors alike.

Suggested strategies – Objective 2

St. Albert must take advantage of e-marketing and all its possibilities with a dedicated tourism website.

High priority strategies

- Build a dedicated website for the express purpose of marketing St. Albert tourism attractions, events and facilities.
- Create a dedicated marketing department responsible for implementing the St. Albert Tourism Master Plan. Its duties should include:
 - developing a marketing plan to identify target markets, cross-promotional opportunities, product linkages and promotional and advertising strategies.
 - developing a media and public relations campaign.
 - working closely with a tourism product development committee (see below).
 - ensuring that St. Albert's tourism theme and brand (yet to be finalized) are applied consistently in all marketing efforts and products.
- Identify the resources necessary to carry out a marketing plan, such as:
 - a city sports commissioner to attract, promote and coordinate sports events for St. Albert.
 - a festivals and events coordinator to attract, promote and coordinate festivals and special events.
 - an arts and culture sub committee to advise on arts and cultural issues.
 - a product development committee, to help research, develop and support community bids for major events.
 - a volunteer representative for each tourism sector.

Other strategies

- Promote heritage sites as a community resource.
- Provide opportunities for festival and event planners to meet regularly to discuss networking, cross promotion, organizational development, volunteers and other issues.
- Ensure that St. Albert is covered with an attractive, well-conceived signage system that welcomes visitors and creates easy access to venues and facilities.

Time investments – Objective 2

Phase 1 (one to two years):

- Establish the dedicated marketing department.
- Develop website and marketing plan.
- Stage an awareness event.

- Phases 1 and 2 (within five years):
- Implement marketing plan.

OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOP THE STURGEON RIVER VALLEY AND DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT

Findings for Objective 3

St. Albert's close proximity to large, vibrant natural areas – the Sturgeon River valley and Lois Hole Provincial Park – makes it distinctive among Canadian cities. An Alberta official of Ducks Unlimited said of Big Lake: “To have a relatively intact wetland of this significance on the doorstep of one million people is a very unique opportunity” [Ringrose, *Strategy*, p. 28]. That Big Lake and the river valley are so close to downtown St. Albert make them even more remarkable. The historical role of the river valley in the development of the early settlement only enhances its potential as a major tourist draw and source of civic pride.

River valley reclamation fits into community values and plans on a number of different levels. It shows a strong commitment to the environment; it supports further downtown vitalization; it aligns with existing master plans (i.e. Heritage Sites, Red Willow Park, parks and Open Spaces Management Plan, and Storm Water Management master plans); and it will provide more opportunities for year-round activities and events. Improving the health of the river will also have a positive effect on Big Lake and Lois Hole Provincial Park. This project makes sense on every count, and all levels of government will see that it fits with their priorities.

Suggested strategies – Objective 3

Partnerships

- Develop a regional commitment to river revitalization (with the City of St. Albert taking the lead role) – **high priority**.
- Seek the support of appropriate provincial and federal government departments to make river revitalization a priority – **high priority**.
- Use environmentally acceptable algae and weed control programs to clean up the Sturgeon River – **high priority**.
- Stabilize the Sturgeon River to enhance year-round activities such as canoeing and skating.

Funding

- Secure funding for algae and weed control.
- Plan to include river maintenance costs as an integral part of future public works budgets.
- Seek funding from appropriate provincial and federal departments to implement river revitalization plans.

Planning

- Commission research and a report on the feasibility and scope of river clean up, with a detailed project plan including cost assessments – **high priority**.
- Proceed with stabilizing river water levels as the first phase of the revitalization project.
- Work with stakeholder groups to achieve broad community support for the project. Align all project activities with existing City plans.

Time investments – Objective 3

Phase 1 (one to two years):

- Research clean up.
- Develop project plan.
- Lobby for regional commitment.

Phases 2 and 3 (10 to 20 years):

- Finish clean up and implement project plan.

OBJECTIVE 4: DEVELOP NEW TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND EVENTS, AND ENHANCE EXISTING ONES

Findings for Objective 4

St. Albert offers a rich assortment of events and attractions in the heritage, arts and culture, sports and nature sectors. If these existing attractions and events are enhanced, and new ones are added to the mix, it will only increase visits to the community and corresponding economic benefits. The aforementioned opportunity provided by the proximity of the Big Lake wetlands to St. Albert also offers tremendous potential for a primary new attraction for the region.

Suggested strategies – Objective 4

High priority strategies

- Work with the province to build a nature interpretive centre in Lois Hole Provincial Park at Big Lake. This centre would serve as a hub for nature tourism activities (such as canoeing, kayaking and eco-tours of the wetlands).
- Implement all master plans relevant to regional tourism activities: the Heritage Sites, Red Willow Park, and Riel Recreation Park master plans; Leisure Services, and the

Economic Development Master Plan. This would include developing and preserving heritage buildings and sites.

- Link the SATMP to the Municipal Development Plan and include it in City Council's annual planning process, to ensure that deadlines are met.

Other strategies

- Attract migratory and other bird species to the region through a nesting box program.
- Build a bird-watching blind in the river valley or adjoining wetlands where people can observe and photograph local wildlife.
- Create a centre for artists (and operated by them) in the downtown area.
- Ensure that the Arden Theatre is fully used throughout the year.
- Require supporting educational programs for all new tourism attractions.
- Consider tourism development opportunities as part of the land use planning and zoning process (e.g., Badger Lands Sport Proposal).
- Conduct extensive public and stakeholder consultations when developing any new tourism products (attractions, facilities, events).
- Foster a close working relationship between the marketing department and the product development committee (see Objective 2).
- Partner with other organizations and jurisdictions to make the most out of funding opportunities.
- Fund the dedicated marketing department so it has the resources to develop and promote St. Albert tourism products.

Time investments – Objective 4

Phase 1 (one to two years):

- “Quick wins” such as bird-watching blind, nesting box program.

Phases 2 and 3 (five or more years):

- Long term projects such as the nature interpretive centre, implementing master plans.

OBJECTIVE 5: MAINTAIN AND UPGRADE EXISTING SPORT FACILITIES AND THE RED WILLOW PARK SYSTEM

Findings for Objective 5

Sport tourism (travel for the purpose of participating in or watching a sporting event) is a major factor in the travel plans of Canadians. In 2001, 32 per cent of Canadians who traveled domestically did so for these reasons. Also, Canadian sport travelers are more likely to have a higher income than other types of travelers [Ringrose, *Addendum*, pp.6-7].

By adding new sports facilities and upgrading existing ones, such as the Riel Recreation area, St. Albert will be able to take advantage of this growing travel market. It must continue to move forward in this sector and over time as existing city facilities reach capacity, the city will need a larger venue to attract conventions and major sporting events.

Maintaining and upgrading the Red Willow Park system will enhance the aesthetic effect of the city for residents and tourists alike. With the Red Willow Park Master Plan approved, maintenance and upgrading activities can and should proceed. They will bring other benefits in addition to aesthetics, including reduced safety hazards, reduced vandalism and improved access for the disabled. A well-conceived preventative maintenance program will also reduce long-term infrastructure replacement costs.

Suggested strategies – Objective 5

High priority strategies

- Instil public ownership and pride in a clean city by further encouragement and empowerment of City employees and citizens to convey a sense of responsibility for the community's public spaces.
- Ensure that adequate resources are in place to maintain facilities at a "best-in-class" level on an ongoing basis.
- Partner with other organizations (such as Ducks Unlimited) to get the most out of budgets and promotions for public spaces like the Red Willow Park system.

Other Strategies

- Implement the Red Willow Park Master Plan.
- Work to develop additional accesses to Lois Hole Provincial Park via road and trail networks.
- Increase St. Albert's involvement in local beautification programs such as Partners in Parks and Communities in Bloom.
- Involve St. Albert's business community in sponsoring or investing in tourism opportunities.
- Attract more major events to support the expansion and upgrading of existing facilities.
- Assign priority status to repairing and maintaining pathway systems in Red Willow Park.
- Install portable, toilet facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities on the Red Willow Park trail system.
- As present facilities reach capacity; plan for a venue with a seating capacity of 5000 or more to attract major conventions and rallies.
- Maintain and enhance existing sports facilities to meet provincial and national standards.

Time investments – Objective 5

Phase 1 (one to two years):

- Dedicated funding for maintenance program.
- Implement of Red Willow Park Master Plan.

Phase 2 (three to five years):

- Expand and upgrade existing facilities.

OBJECTIVE 6: INCREASE VISITOR OPTIONS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

Findings for Objective 6

The ability to attract tourist visitors from all socio-economic groups to St. Albert as a destination location will depend significantly on the accommodation choices it can offer. As mentioned above, St. Albert only has 226 hotel rooms at present. In particular, the downtown core needs small accommodation properties such as guest houses, inns and lodges. The city also needs hotels, motels, RV parks and campgrounds.

Planning and promoting this kind of commercial growth will achieve benefits such as reducing the leakage to Edmonton of potential overnight visitors. It will also increase the number of visits to St. Albert tourist facilities and commercial amenities. Moreover, this kind of growth can be created through private investment, which in turn will improve the municipal tax base. Accommodation is a core component of any tourism plan, and the City of St. Albert should encourage growth through appropriate zoning and land use planning. The concept of zoning and land use planning to support tourism should be incorporated into the Municipal Development Plan and its processes.

Suggested strategies – Objective 6

- Ensure that City development policies and processes encourage business growth.
- Ensure that properly zoned land is available for development of all types of accommodation facilities.
- Aggressively pursue third party organizations to build additional accommodation in St. Albert.
- Encourage the growth of bed-and-breakfast type accommodations.
- Facilitate the expansion and upgrading of the existing RV park and campground.
- Aggressively pursue developers who will build additional RV facilities and campgrounds.

Time investments – Objective 6

Phase 1 (one to two years):

- Begin the process of rezoning land for commercial development.
- Encourage the development of RV parks and campgrounds.

Phase 2 (three to five years):

- Encourage development of full range of accommodation choices (hotel, motels, B-and-Bs, etc.).

OBJECTIVE 7: CREATE A TOURISM BRAND FOR ST. ALBERT

Findings for Objective 7

St. Albert lacks a distinctive brand that it can use to market the tourism experiences and opportunities it offers. While it has a business motto – “Business is right in St. Albert” – the City has not yet settled on a tourism brand.

A brand must reflect the perception that both visitors and residents alike share about a community. It must be *distinctive*, and somehow communicate the unique and interesting aspects of a community. To be successful, it must not draw on broad, common ideas such as “the outdoors” or “family fun,” but must instead focus on the specific things that make one community different from others. A brand speaks to, and illustrates, a community’s distinct identity and the experiences that go with it, in the way that Calgary’s “Stampede City” brand says so much about the attitudes and activities that a visitor will encounter in that city.

A brand is more than a logo, more than a motto or tagline; it is an identity, based on a well-researched, carefully-conceived compilation of themes, key messages, taglines and logo, all wrapped up together to comprise a powerful marketing tool. The research for a brand should come through a comprehensive community assessment process conducted by a marketing professional, to provide an expert, outsider’s perspective. St. Albert needs to work through such a process; St. Albert needs a brand.

Suggested strategies – Objective 7

- Conduct a community assessment process to identify the unique characteristics and experiences that will comprise St. Albert’s brand.
- Under take a branding exercise to guide the branding process and ensure a quality final product.
- Conduct a stakeholder consultation (involving City and community representatives) to identify preliminary themes that might go into a brand. This consultation should include a brainstorming process where all ideas are welcomed as a starting point. Ensure the stakeholders understand that the City owns the branding process.
- Work through a multi-step process to narrow down themes and develop supporting visual and verbal messages.
- Once an initial concept (themes, visual and verbal messages) for a brand has been developed, check back with stakeholders for further input, *not* their approval.
- Once the brand is refined and finally approved (by the City as owners of the process), announce it with a celebratory kick-off event and ensure that all future tourism planning and promotional activities incorporate it.

Time investments – Objective 7

Phase 1 (one year):

- Conduct community assessment process.
- Consultation, brand development and announcement.

Phase 2 (ongoing after Phase 1):

- Incorporate brand into all tourism planning and promotional activities.

OBJECTIVE 8: SEEK FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

Findings for Objective 8

Implementing all the strategies in the preceding seven recommendations will cost millions of dollars. Obviously, the City of St. Albert cannot carry this financial burden alone; it will need funding support from both the provincial and federal governments.

Suggested strategies – Objective 8

- The City of St. Albert, both its elected officials and senior administrators, must play the lead role in researching funding opportunities and lobbying provincial and federal governments for financial commitment.
- The likelihood of success in obtaining funding for the objectives in the SATMP will partly depend on the quality of the business case presented to provincial and federal decision-makers. Therefore, the City needs a strong business case to support the SATMP.
- The City also needs a plan for approaching the appropriate federal and provincial authorities on both the political and administrative levels.

Time investments – Objective 8

Phase 1 (one year):

- Develop appropriate business cases to support the master plan strategies
- Research grant and other funding programs available through other levels of government.

Phase 2 (Phase 1 and ongoing):

- Present business cases to appropriate provincial and federal authorities.
- Apply for all appropriate grants.
- Lobby through political avenues to obtain the required funding.

CORE VALUES

The objectives of the SATMP are based on a number of core values the SEE St. Albert Committee has identified.

- Tourism is an economic generator that will bring many benefits to St. Albert; as such, it is worthy of investment by the City of St. Albert.
- Tourism is a “clean and green” industry that will complement the quality of life for St. Albert residents without compromising it.
- St. Albert residents value their heritage, culture and the arts, their festivals, sports, their city’s natural setting, and the agricultural abundance of the surrounding region. These core values are a superb fit with the region’s significant tourism sectors.
- The SATMP cannot succeed without the demonstrated commitment and support of City Council and the administration.
- The SATMP requires the commitment and support of many stakeholders, including: the SEE St. Albert committee, City Council, City administration and staff, the DBA, private businesses, Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture, local tourism interest groups, Travel Alberta, regional partners, non-profit organizations, the Arts and Heritage Foundation, community service clubs and consultants.
- City Council and the administration must play an active role in sourcing funds for implementing the SATMP.
- The success of the SATMP will be dependant on both corporate and community buy-in as to the value of an enhanced tourism sector.
- Any detailed plans to emerge from the SATMP will be aligned with existing approved plans such as the Red Willow Park Master Plan, the Heritage Sites Master Plan, and the Economic Development Master Plan, Riel Recreation Area, Leisure Services as well as City and regional long term goals and strategies.
- The City of St. Albert will require risk management policies for any activities, events or facilities implemented through the recommendations of the tourism strategy.
- The objectives for the SATMP are prioritized according to time and cost-effectiveness.

- To serve several of the SATMP objectives, St. Albert Place will have a greater cultural emphasis than it currently does; administration offices now situated in the complex will be located elsewhere.
- In order to offer authentic tourism experiences and to encourage visitation from other cultures SATMP would encourage tourism operators to value bilingualism and diversity.
- Finally, the St. Albert Tourism Master Plan does not identify cost estimates; this task was not included in the scope of the project, nor does the SEE St. Albert Committee have the expertise to provide this information.

POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The SEE St. Albert Committee has identified potential performance measures for each of the Tourism Master Plan objectives. These performance measures will indicate to advisory committees, residents, staff, administration and Council how successful we are at achieving our tourism objectives.

Further vitalize the downtown area

Potential performance measures:

- Number of commercial businesses and restaurants in the downtown
- Redevelopment of St. Albert Place by 2011
- Satisfaction rate of downtown businesses
- Number of special events in the downtown
- Number of people that attend these events

Promote current and future tourist attractions and events

Potential performance measures:

- Number of participants at events
- Number of website hits
- Number of advertising and promotional programs
- Effectiveness of the advertising and promotional programs
- Development of a marketing department and a marketing plan (target date 2009)
- Number of trade shows, conferences and conventions attended
- Number of visitors that are satisfied or very satisfied with tourism events and attractions
- Amount of leveraged marketing dollars
- Private sponsorship dollars committed

Develop the Sturgeon River valley and downtown riverfront

Potential performance measures:

- Number of activities that are held on the river (such as canoeing and skating)
- Percentage of residents that are satisfied or very satisfied with City of St. Albert parks and trail systems
- Percentage of improved oxygenation in the river
- Completion of river revitalization plan and cost assessments by 2011
- Number of new buildings that face the riverfront
- Number of existing buildings that reorient themselves to the river
- Number of residents that assist with the annual Sturgeon River Clean-up
- Number of existing master plans implemented
- Number of regional and government meetings on river valley development

Develop new tourist attractions and events, and enhance existing ones

Potential performance measures:

- Number of events
- Number of participants at events
- Number of attractions
- Number of website hits
- Satisfaction rate of visitors to these attractions
- Number of new attractions, facilities and events

Maintain and upgrade existing sport facilities and the Red Willow Park system

Potential performance measures:

- Number of major sporting events in the city per year, (events that attract 250 or more participants)
- Number of sports facilities that meet provincial and national standards
- Number of marketing and cost sharing initiatives with other organizations
- Percentage of residents who are satisfied or very satisfied with various City of St. Albert facilities
- Percentage of residents who are satisfied or very satisfied with City of St. Albert parks and trail systems
- Number of existing facility upgrades and expansions

Increase visitor options for accommodations

Potential performance measures:

- Number of total rooms available (hotel, motel, inn, B&B)
- Variety of accommodation that is available
- Number of camping/R.V. stalls available
- Occupancy rates of all accommodation options
- Customer satisfaction levels with accommodation

Create a tourism brand for St. Albert

Potential performance measures:

- Complete a community assessment
- Select a brand and theme for St. Albert's tourism sector
- Percentage of marketing and promotional initiatives that use the tourism brand

Seek financial support from all levels of government for implementing the St. Albert Tourism Master Plan

Potential performance measures:

- Financial commitment from municipal, provincial and federal government (capital dollars rather than marketing dollars)

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND

In 2001-02, a volunteer tourism task force developed a framework for tourism development in St. Albert. Realizing the need for further expertise, the committee followed due process to hire consultants Dawn Ringrose and Associates.

The consultants conducted a two-phase study. The first phase was an inventory of existing and latent tourism attractions, and concluded that St. Albert had the potential to become a tourist destination. Based on this conclusion, the committee requested the consultants to develop strategies that might indeed turn St. Albert into a tourist destination – that was the second phase of the study. City Council received the consultants' report in 2005, entitled the *Community Tourism Strategy (CTS)*, and requested further research and refinement of the plan contained in the report.

In March of 2005, with the multi-purpose leisure centre plebiscite approved, the tourism committee again hired Dawn Ringrose and Associates to study St. Albert's sports tourism sector. This resulted in a *Sports Addendum* to the CTS in June 2005. That same month, Business and Tourism Development engaged another consultant to conduct a stakeholder tourism consultation in St. Albert. The objective was to demonstrate the value of tourism and to generate excitement and garner community commitment to help St. Albert achieve its goal of becoming a tourism destination. The St. Albert Tourism Advisory Committee was born out of that workshop and began meeting October 2005. The committee has since changed its name to SEE St. Albert.

METHODOLOGY

The SEE St. Albert committee has used the Dawn Ringrose and Associates *Community Tourism Strategy (CTS)* and *Sports Addendum* as the main reference for this report. It also drew from the sub-committees it formed (based on the tourism sectors identified in this report) to study the Ringrose recommendations and add new ones. All these sub-committees presented reports using a standard template, and the main committee reviewed the conclusions and recommendations in these reports and categorized and prioritized them. The end result is the St. Albert Tourism Master Plan.

As part of this process, the main committee formed another sub-committee to study a potential tourism theme and initial concepts for branding. The committee has received endorsement from SAEDAC for the new concepts and will present them for SLT review and City Council approval.

SEE St. Albert Committee Members

Name	Sector
Ann Conlin	Agri-tourism (Arts & Heritage Foundation)
Ann Ramsden	Heritage (Arts & Heritage Foundation)
Bob Gray	Festivals & Events
Heidi Alther	Arts (Arts & Heritage Foundation)
Sharon Morin	Aboriginal/ Metis
Malcolm Parker	Sports
Murray Barker	Natural Tourism
Joan Guillemette	Downtown Business Association
Neil Matthews	Tourism & Hospitality
Lynda Moffat	Chamber of Commerce
Jack O'Neill	Tourism Generalist
Carol Donald	Tourism Generalist
Paul Moulton	Servus Credit Union Place
Kevin Crockett	Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture
Joan Barber	Business & Tourism Development
Resource People	
Denise Beaudry	La Chambre économique de l'Alberta
David Dusome (vacant since Sept 2006)	Director of Culture, City of St. Albert
Roger Belley	City of St. Albert – Parks
Judi Best	Edmonton & Area Tourism Destination Region
Jennifer Jennax	City of St. Albert – Corporate Planning
Ernie Chauvet	Association Canadienne-Francaise de l'Alberta Regional Centralta
Tam Andersen	Ag Tourism Expert
Pat Wagensveld	Visual Arts
Larry Horncastle	Business & Tourism Development