

9. Cultural Richness

Goal: St. Albert celebrates its heritage, promotes the arts, and provides residents and visitors with opportunities for cultural enrichment.





Cultural Richness

Culture is the shared, multi-dimensional, and ever-changing identity of a community, and St. Albert attaches great importance to its cultural amenities. Events and activities provide opportunities for expression, entertainment, dialogue, and community building, while simultaneously reinforcing a shared sense of place. Cultural initiatives support a city by bolstering economic and neighbourhood revitalization, animating public spaces, supporting community connections, and enhancing quality of life. Flourishing cities assist cultural leaders to meet their potential by providing access to facilities, events, and opportunities.

Fostering a thriving cultural community requires an awareness and acknowledgment of St. Albert's history. Recognizing the important relationship that Indigenous and Métis people have with the land supports an increased understanding and restoration of respectful and positive relationships among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This enables St. Albert to highlight this history and celebrate the people, places, and stories that make the city what it is today while supporting reconciliation. The principles and policies in this section support and enhance St. Albert's cultural richness as the city grows.

9.1. Cultural Development and Programming

Principle: Provide opportunities for residents and visitors to experience arts and cultural programming.

St. Albert has a long history of supporting cultural development and programming. The city offers a variety of public art, history, heritage, and theatre programs and events that are treasured by residents and visitors alike. This cultural infrastructure has established St. Albert as a hub for storytellers, creators, doers, and dreamers, as well as for those who have experienced and been enriched by their work.

Maintaining and building on St. Albert's cultural legacy requires community partnerships and creative responses to the opportunities that lie ahead. The following policies guide cultural development and programming that delights, informs, and involves residents and visitors.

Policies:

9.1.1. Identify cultural infrastructure, programming, and partnership opportunities through complementary plans and strategies, which would also guide the location of cultural facilities.

9.1.2. Assess the impact of development and redevelopment proposals on cultural assets and identify opportunities for the creation or enhancement of these assets.

9.1.3. Maintain and enhance existing cultural facilities and other community spaces used for cultural programming, guided by the City's cultural plan and associated strategies.

9.1.4. Explore opportunities for offering City- and community-run cultural programming in new and existing community facilities.

9.1.5. Explore opportunities for integrating cultural programming facilities and other community services into new private development through partnerships.

9.1.6. Identify and promote Downtown and the surrounding area as a cultural district.

9.1.7. Maintain and promote Downtown as the preferred location for major new cultural facilities.

9.1.8. Support St. Albert's artistic, cultural, and creative industries as a tactic for growing economic development opportunities.



9.2. Heritage Conservation

Principle: Promote St. Albert's rich history by conserving tangible and intangible parts of the city's heritage.

Founded in 1861, St. Albert is the oldest non-fortified prairie community west of Winnipeg. The area that would become St. Albert is also the traditional home and meeting ground for many Indigenous peoples, including Cree, Saulteaux, Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Métis, and Nakota Sioux peoples. St. Albert, which was founded as a Métis settlement by Father Albert Lacombe of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), is rich with history and home to numerous historic and archaeological resources. The policies below support the identification, conservation, and protection of historic and archaeological resources in the city and manage the potential impacts of new development and redevelopment on these resources.

Policies:

9.2.1. Identify, conserve, and celebrate significant historic and archaeological resources in St. Albert, including, but not limited to, historic buildings, public spaces, landscapes, streetscapes, and districts.

9.2.2. Identify, conserve, and celebrate intangible cultural heritage in St. Albert, including oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, and the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

9.2.3. Encourage and promote heritage conservation through a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a) Supporting and promoting historic resource designation programs;
- b) Maintaining an inventory of potential municipal historic resources candidates;
- c) Collaborating with other levels of government, organizations, or individuals to protect historic resources; and
- d) Designing and implementing guidelines and regulations to minimize potentially adverse impacts of development on significant historic and archeological resources.



Eric Schultz

9.2.4. Support the conservation and enhancement of designated municipal Historic Resources and Historic Resources identified by other levels of government.

9.2.5. Encourage statutory plans, design guidelines, and related studies to identify, respect, and conserve the heritage features and historic character of areas, districts, and individual properties.

9.2.6. Require heritage assessments or studies, as deemed necessary by the City, where development is proposed on or abutting sites that contain provincially or municipally designated historic resources.

9.2.7. Facilitate the review of heritage assessments, which include a Statement of Significance, for properties on the City's, Province's, or Canada's Register of Historic Places, when reviewing planning and development applications, to protect their historic integrity and context.

9.2.8. Facilitate and support using City-owned designated municipal Historic Resources for different uses than originally intended, provided that the redevelopment does not result in adverse impacts on its heritage value.

9.2.9. Ensure restoration and conservation activities maintain the historical and architectural integrity of historic resources, as may be specified through a municipal or provincial heritage resource designation and in alignment with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

9.2.10. Encourage new development or redevelopment that abuts historic resources to be compatible in terms of height, mass, setbacks, and overall architectural treatment.

9.2.11. Encourage historic resources within new developments and redevelopment plans to align with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

9.2.12. Explore ways to incorporate local history interpretive elements through public improvements in neighbourhoods.

9.2.13. Support appropriate changes to the Land Use Bylaw that encourage the retention, conservation, and adaptive reuse of historic resources.

9.2.14. Encourage land-use changes that increase the viability of retaining historic resources

Levels of historic protection

Designation is a form of legal protection that helps to recognize and protect historic places. Historic Places can be protected at the municipal, provincial, or national level.

Alberta municipalities are empowered under the Historical Resources Act to designate historic places through the passage of a local bylaw. The bylaw legally protects historic resources from demolition or alterations that take away from their heritage value.

9.3. Payhonin Reconciliation St. Albert

Principle: Support reconciliation and increase residents' awareness of the rich Indigenous history and culture in the St. Albert area.

Payhonin Reconciliation St. Albert is a City initiative that supports our ongoing journey towards reconciliation. St. Albert is located on the traditional territory of many Indigenous groups, is the homeland of the Métis people of Alberta, and is located within Treaty 6 territory. The First Nations and Métis history of the St. Albert area has often been overlooked when telling the story of the city's development and when making land-use decisions. The policies below support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action by engaging Indigenous communities in meaningful ways and advancing the community's reconciliation journey with Indigenous peoples.

Policies:

9.3.1. Identify opportunities to contribute to reconciliation efforts through City and land-use policies, processes, and decisions.

9.3.2. Acknowledge and promote Indigenous culture within the context of the history of the city and Treaty 6 territory.

9.3.3. Incorporate Indigenous place names and cultural and historic interpretive elements in new development and redevelopment and actively involve Métis and First Nations communities in the process.

9.3.4. Recognize and celebrate traditional and contemporary Indigenous art and culture in the community.

What does Payhonin mean?

Payhonin is a Cree word for gathering place and is a traditional Indigenous description of the valley where St. Albert is located. Many stories passed down through the Nehiyaw people describe numerous places at certain lakes and along the Sturgeon River valley as places of Payhonin to rest, camp or use as navigable coordinates in their travels.



Marc Chalifoux

9.4. Public Art

Principle: Celebrate cultures, instill civic pride, and support placemaking by increasing the prominence of public art across the city.

Public art reflects the diverse cultural character of St. Albert. It reflects local history and stories, creates an enhanced sense of community, inspires viewers and participants, and challenges the way they understand the city and the world. Public art contributes to an engaging and visually rich environment, activates public spaces, attracts tourism, and supports business. Public art stimulates growth in the community's arts and culture sector by providing opportunities for learning about, participating in, and experimenting with arts and culture. The following policies facilitate the integration of public art in new developments and provide opportunities for the public to experience art throughout the city.

Policies:

9.4.1. Incorporate art in public spaces to reinforce a distinct and memorable sense of place and to enhance the quality of life for St. Albert residents.

9.4.2. Use capital project contributions to create public art on site or to initiate a fund for public art that is managed by the City, in accordance with the City's Public Art Policy.

9.4.3. Encourage private commercial and high-density residential developments to include public art into development and redevelopment plans.

9.4.4. Engage with artists and public art stakeholders when undertaking significant infrastructure projects and when identifying opportunities for public art.

"A city always contains more than any inhabitant can know, and a great city always makes the unknown and the possible spurs to the imagination."

– Rebecca Solnit, writer and activist



Steve Knight

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